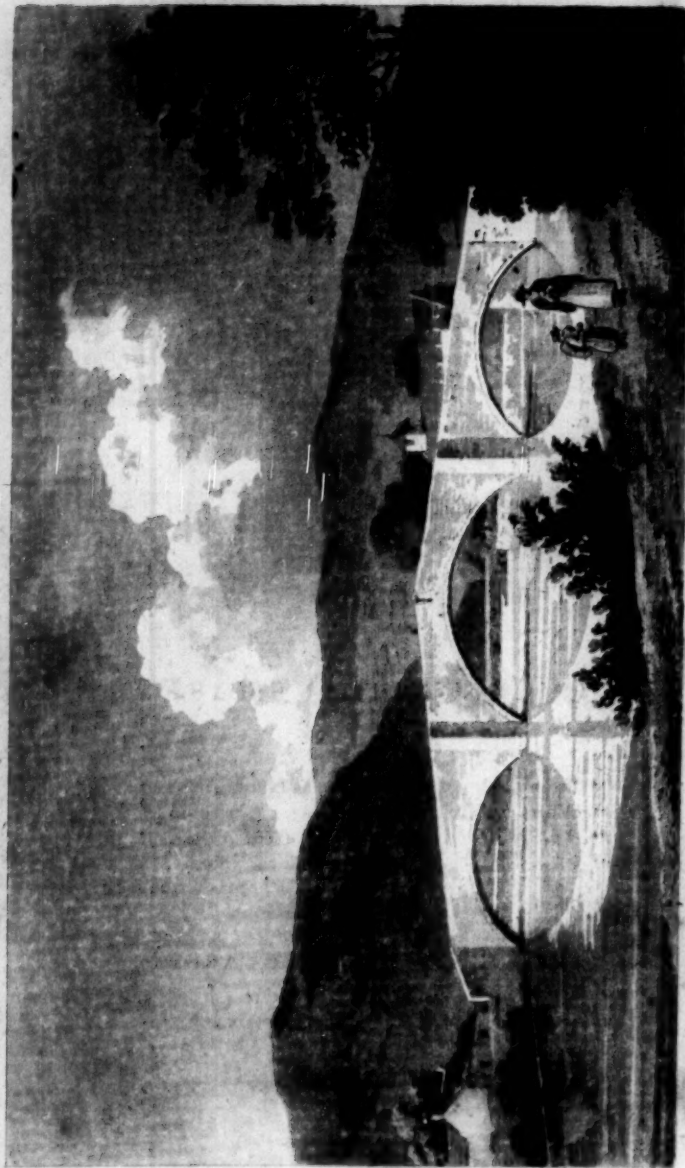


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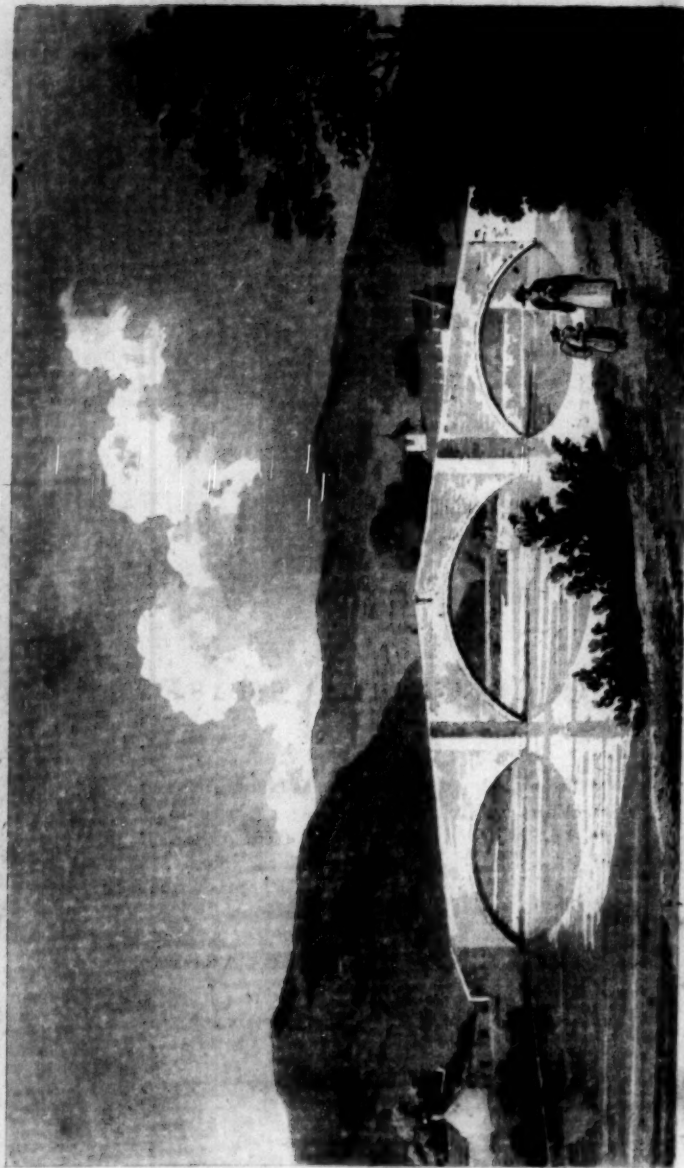


Samuel 2d.

Glenrurst Bridge

Underwood Sculp^d

Frontispiece



Samuel 2d.

Glenruth Bridge

Underwood Sculpt.

Glanvost Bridge

A
COLLECTION
OF
WELSH TOURS;
K OR,
A DISPLAY
OF THE
BEAUTIES OF WALES,
SELECTED PRINCIPALLY FROM
CELEBRATED HISTORIES
AND
POPULAR TOURS.
WITH
OCCASIONAL REMARKS.

~~~~~  
" Proud of her ancient race, Britannia shows,  
" Where, in her WALES, another Eden glows;  
" And all her sons, to truth and honour dear,  
" Prove they deserve the Paradise they share."  
MISS SEWARD.

~~~~~  
SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

Embellished with fine Engravings.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR G. SAELE, NO. 192, STRAND;
And sold by M. POOLE and Son, Chester.

1797.

Price 5s. Boards.

WELSH TOWNS
A D I R E C T O R Y
OF THE
WELSH TOWNS



THE
WELSH TOWNS
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WELSH TOWNS

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

IT may be respectful and proper to inform the Reader, that so much additional information has been received by the Publisher, since the first appearance of these Tours, it was found impracticable to print it apart from the present Edition; otherwise, he gladly would have done it, from a wish to oblige those persons who might have thought it a plan desirable. Should any future communications, however, be received, they shall be printed and sold separately, by way of Appendix to the present Work, for the accommodation of its purchasers. The Publisher embraces this opportunity of returning his grateful acknowledgments to those Gentlemen who have indulged him with Extracts from their private papers; also, for various communications of Friends.

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P R E F A C E.

SEVERAL of the most popular and interesting TOURS in WALES having become *scarce*, the present Editor has been induced to compress various selections from them into one volume, leaving each Tourist to pursue his respective track. He has availed himself also of the most respectable histories for the further improvement of the same.

To have digested the whole into one regular journey, might to some travellers have appeared desirable; but in that case, much of the beauty and scenery of the country would have been unnoticed, from the external or internal situation of particular objects; whereas, by dividing it into separate sections, each

route becomes more fully described. Hence, whoever may be desirous to make any part of the Tour of Wales, will almost every where find an excursion marked out, its antiquities and beauties described, with every other leading feature of local interest, or what may afford gratification to the mind.

In some instances, where authors may have differed in their narratives, it has been thought advisable to retain each description, for the sake of obtaining a more *accurate account of places*. This will undoubtedly afford considerable novelty and utility to the work.

In exploring the picturesque beauties of WALES, it is hoped therefore that this little volume will be found essentially useful. It has been long allowed that no country can boast of richer prospects, or encompass scenes of more historic celebrity.

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THE
COUNTIES OF NORTH WALES

ARE,

Anglesea, Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, and Montgomeryshire.

ANGLESEA is 28 miles long and 13 broad, has 2 towns and 74 parishes; it produces copper, mill and grind stones, red, yellow, and blue ochre, fine pastures, with corn and cattle.—*Caernarvonshire* is 48 miles broad, 23 long, has five towns and 68 parishes; its products are timber, slate, goats, copper, fish, &c.—*Denbighshire* is 50 miles long and 20 broad, has 4 towns and 57 parishes; its manufactures are those of gloves and flannels, and its products corn, horned cattle, and lead.—*Flintshire* is 33 miles long and 11 broad, has 3 towns and 28 parishes; it produces cattle, butter, honey, coal, and lead; it has likewise a cotton and twist, and copper manufactory.—*Merionethshire* is 40 miles long and 36 broad, has 4 towns and 37 parishes; it abounds with cattle, sheep, fish, and game; its chief manufacture is Welsh cottons.—*Montgomeryshire* is 40 miles long and 37 broad, has 6 towns and 47 parishes; it has lead, plenty of fish and fowls, with a breed of large black cattle and horses; its principal manufacture is flannel.

THE

THE
COUNTIES OF SOUTH WALES
ARE,

*Brecknockshire, Cardiganshire, Caermarthenshire,
Glamorganshire, Pembrokehire, and Radnorshire.*

BRECKNOCKSHIRE is 33 miles long, 32 broad, has 4 towns and 61 parishes; its product is corn, fowl, fish, and cattle; its manufactures are woollen stuffs and stockings.—*Cardiganshire* is 47 miles long, 20 broad, has 6 towns and 64 parishes; it produces corn, plenty of cattle, game, with sea and river fish, has mines of lead, copper, and silver ore.—*Caermarthenshire* is 48 miles long, 25 broad, has 8 towns, 87 parishes. This county is well clothed with wood, and feeds vast numbers of cattle; it abounds with fowl, fish, and game, and has coal and lead mines.—*Glamorganshire* is 50 miles long, and 24 broad, has 9 towns, 118 parishes; it produces pastures, corn, and pit-coal, culm, and lead ore.—*Pembrokehire* is 35 miles long, 29 broad, has 4 towns, and 145 parishes; it produces corn, sheep, cattle, fowls, and fish, with coal-mines, and marl.—*Radnorshire* is 30 miles long and 25 broad; it has 4 towns and 52 parishes; its produce is cattle, sheep, horses, and cheese, and its only manufacture malt.

INTRODUCTION.

THE origin of every nation is necessarily obscure, and always lost in a pretended antiquity. On the authority of Bochart we may trace the Welsh from a very early period indeed. That Britain, however, was peopled from Gaul 1000 years before Christ, appears very probable; the arguments in favour of this opinion are deduced from the state of population on the continent, and from the progress of it in the island itself. It has been well observed,* that names descriptive of national manners cannot be the original ap-

* Mr. Whitaker.

pellations of any people ; they result from the intercourse and experience of the states around them, on whose territories they have dared to incroach.

The name of Cymri appears to have been the great hereditary distinction of the Gauls upon the continent, and to have been carried with them into all their conquests ; it was not retained in our island merely by the natives of Wales, but was equally the appellation of a nation in the south-west of Somersetshire and the north-east of Cornwall.

The first denomination of our island was certainly Albion, a name given before the country was inhabited : it was the Celtic term for heights or eminences. The Alps, some ages before the days of Strabo, were called Albia ; and in his time there remained two tribes on the
mountains

mountains that bore the names of Albiœci and Albienses.

The second denomination was that of Britain, derived from a Celtic word likewise, signifying *divided*, not *painted*: this etymology has lately been proved not to have been applied to the region, but bestowed on the inhabitants; not previously borne on the continent by the original settlers of the country, but assumed or received at their first removal into the island.

The general denomination of *Wales* was not imposed on the country by the Saxons, but was the acknowledged appellation of the region as early as the sixth century, if we may believe a quotation from Talieffin, as cited by Mr. Davies.

When that part of Britain, which comprehends the present kingdom of England and principality of Wales,

was divided into several petty kingdoms, the inhabitants were all distinguished by different names. The principality of Wales, formerly comprehending the whole country beyond the Severn, was in the Roman times occupied by the Silures, the Dimetæ, and Ordovices; to these belonged not only the twelve counties of Wales, but likewise the two others lying beyond the Severn, Herefordshire, and Monmouthshire, which in the reign of Charles the Second were first reckoned amongst the English counties.

The country now known by the name of North Wales was inhabited by the Ordovices only, who held out first against the Romans, and afterwards against the English, after the other Britons were subdued; for by the Romans they were not reduced till the time of Domitian, nor by

by the English till the reign of Henry the First.

About forty-five years before the Christian æra, Britain was first invaded by the Romans under Julius Cæsar; afterwards by Claudius, and at length became a province under the Roman empire; it was governed by lieutenants, or deputies, sent from Rome, as Ireland is now by deputies from England; and continued thus under the Romans for upwards of 400 years; till that empire being invaded by the Goths and Vandals, the Romans were forced not only to recall their own armies, but also to draw from hence the bravest of the Britons, for their assistance against those barbarians.

The country being left in a defenceless state, was invaded by the Scots, who were so rapacious, that the Britons sent over a miserable application

cation for relief to Ætius, the Roman general, who, by several famous successes, for a time had repelled the violence of the Gothic arms; but, receiving no hopes of any succours from that general, the South Britons invited over the Saxons, who no sooner delivered them from their ancient foes the Picts and Scots, than they strengthened their own numbers, turned their arms against the natives, and conquered them, some few excepted, who secured themselves in the mountains of Wales; whence their descendants have always been distinguished by the title of *Ancient Britons*.

Wales was anciently bounded by the Irish seas, and by the rivers Severn and Dee, till the Saxons became masters of all the level countries over those rivers; and till *Offa*,*

* See Tour from Chester, &c.

King of Mercia, made the celebrated trench, which is still called by his name. This trench, which extended from north to south; from the mouth of the river Dee to that of the Wye, has been thought to have been an imitation of the ramparts which were thrown up by Agricola, Adrian, and Severus, to guard the Romans against the incursions of the northern barbarians.

Notwithstanding many attempts of the English, the Welsh enjoyed their own laws, and lived under their own princes, till, in the year 1282, Llewellyn lost both his principality and life. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, Wales was incorporated and united with England; and, by a statute of the 27th of that reign, all laws and liberties of England were to take place there; from which time the Welch have approved themselves

truly worthy of their high origin,
loyal and dutiful to their King, and
always zealous for the welfare of the
community.

ROMANTIC

ROMANTIC PARTS
OF
NORTH WALES,
FROM
SHREWSBURY TO CAERNARVON,
AND THE
VALE of CLWYD.

B 5



ROMANTIC PARTS
OF
NORTH WALES.

THE romantic beauties of nature are so singular and extravagant in the principality of Wales, particularly in the counties of Merioneth and Caernarvon, that they are scarcely to be conceived by those who have confined their curiosity to the other parts of Great Britain.

This journey was undertaken rather late in the autumn ; the season proved remarkably favourable ; neither rains nor winds impeded my progress—the air on the mountains

was left rarefied by the summer's heat, the sun shone out all the day on Cader, and Snowdon had not begun to fortify himself against this almost winter approach.

I set out from Shrewsbury to Welsh Poole—the last eight miles afforded a most beautiful prospect of a rich vale in Montgomeryshire. The vales throughout this county are remarkably pleasant, abound with corn, and are luxuriant in pasturage.

Welsh Poole is a place of some note—it is one of the five boroughs in Montgomeryshire, which jointly send a member to Parliament. It takes its name from a contemptible black pool, which is said to be unfathomable.

The gentlemen in this town and neighbourhood have, with becoming spirit and liberality, opened a
sub-

subscription for the purpose of erecting a county-hall, market-places, and other rooms, for public convenience and accommodation in this town, which is expected will be soon carried into effect.

The country from Welsh Poole towards Llalymynach is most beautifully broken into gentle risings, prettily wooded. Gilesfield church and village are pleasingly situated under the hills. The church is dedicated to St. Giles. Tanner says it was founded in 1170.

About a mile from hence stands Powis Castle, or *Red Castle*, from the colour of the stones of which it is built. The situation of it is certainly very noble; but I cannot agree with Lord Lyttleton, that three thousand pounds would make it the most august place in the kingdom: there is much to be done in the mere approach,

proach, and at present you are obliged to ask where the Severn runs. The ground is laid out in that formal style of gardening that was brought in at the Revolution, and there will be much difficulty in altering it with propriety.

On my return to Poole, I ordered a carriage to convey me to Llanvair; this was to be my last stage on known ground—the road was perfectly good, the people in general spoke English, and their civility was so remarkable, that the very turnpike man was grateful for the toll. I was here most strongly recommended to a good house, about twelve miles distant, Cann's Office, a very respectable inn, and far superior to those at Llanvair. About two miles from Cann's Office, the road enters a valley, surrounded by mountains, which continue to Mallevyd, where
a post-

a post-chaise may be had, an accommodation not to be met with at Dinas-y-Mowddu. After contending with some trifling difficulties on the road, I arrived at Dinas-y-Mowddu.

This city (for *dinas* is Welsh for city) is possessed of many and great advantages ; there is no body corporate to divide it into faction, there is not a single office that can possibly be contended for—the rent of houses will be the same at all seasons, and even in August you are never incommoded by the sun. The river is not large, but it will never be incroached upon by the inhabitants ; their sequestered walks will never be injured by any fresh dealers in taste.

I did not see a cathedral, nor heard of either bishop or palace.

There is no court of judicature open here.

The

The theatre is held in great repute. I had the pleasure to be present at one play, which is here called an *anter-lute*, probably a corruption from our term interlude.

The road from Dinas-y-Mowddu is a grand pass between two mountains, and the views prodigiously fine. The first sight of Cader Idris disappointed me ; but I soon recollected, that as I was then on high ground, it must have been from some other point of view that this mountain had rendered itself so remarkable. In the course of this reflection, I was on a sudden delighted with the country round Dolgelly ; woods, rocks, a rich vale, a fine river, and, at that distance, the appearance of rather a decent town, surrounded with many gentlemen's seats ; these, contrasted with the barrenness I had just travelled through,
all

all joined to render the prospect truly delicious.

At the inn there are good accommodations, and the person who keeps it, obliging.

Barmouth, ten miles from Dolgelly: its beauties are so manifold and extraordinary, that they literally “beggars description.” New pastures of the most exuberant fertility; new wood, rising in the majesty of foliage; the road curving into numberless unexpected directions, at one moment shut into a verdant recess, so contracted, that there appears scarce a bridle way out of it; at another, the azure expanse of the main ocean falling upon the eye: on all sides rocks glitter in colours of that beauty which constitutes the sublime. On the other hand, plains, villas, cottages, and venerable halls, with whatever tends to form the
middle

middle grace that belongs to the beautiful. Such are objects that you meet with on the way to Dolgelly.

I sent out for a guide, that I might retire to Cader Idris. On the arrival of the guide, I set out immediately, and found the tract exceedingly good, till I came to a prominent part of the mountain, and here, I must acknowledge, my head was too giddy sufficiently to admire the amazing scene that was opening to my view. At length having gained the summit (the whole ascent being near three miles) on a fine piece of level ground, I could with comfort survey the sea, the Caernarvonshire shore, and Snowdon without a cloud upon his top; lakes, rivers, rocks, and precipices, which were every way spread before me; at the bottom of the hill, on the opposite side, was a small village, to which

which several were returning heavy laden from Dolgelly market; this village is remarkable for nothing but the remains of a small castle, whose miserable situation could not secure it from the depredations of Cromwell's army. In the course of my survey of the mountain, it seemed to take a thousand capricious forms; but the most wonderful part of it is the tremendous peak, which overhangs the lake of the * Three Grains: but here I shall forbear description, as a fine representation of it has been lately executed by the ingenious and accurate pencil of Mr. Wilson. On my return I discovered, far out of any tract, on the steepest part of the hill, a man ga-

* The common people believe these three large crags to have been cast out of the shoes of the giant Idris.

thering rock-moss to dye baizes red. This excrescence is chiefly sold to Dublin; it affords a most beautiful colour at first, and if mixed with proper ingredients and distilled, will, it is said, become permanent. Being very thirsty with heat and fatigue, I inquired for some goat's milk, but to no purpose; the guide, however, informed me, that he could procure me from a neighbouring cattage a liquor peculiar to that part of North Wales, which infinitely exceeded Stirom cyder; I tasted it, and found it was made of mountain-ash berries and crabs or sloes; it should remain at least half a year in the vessel before it is bottled off, and if it were then kept to a proper age, it would not be altogether contemptible. The tediousness of my return to Dolgelly was somewhat beguiled
by

by the consequential information of the guide, and I must own he greatly entertained me.

The next morning being Sunday, I went to eight o'clock prayers here; the area of the church is spacious, and the pews neat; there is a coving roof of wood, which is necessary to aid the voice, as the floor is only clay covered with deep rushes; the congregation was large, and the service was read with devotion and propriety.

My stay was prolonged at Dolgelly, that the master of the inn, who was absent on my first arrival, and who was justly recommended to me as an intelligent person, might attend me to see the three wonderful water-falls in this neighbourhood. About five miles on the road towards Tan-y-Bwlch, immediately on having crossed a bridge, we turned
on

on the left hand to see the first, called Doel Malenllyn, which I take to be a part of the river Derry; this is not more than fifty feet in height, but you may afterwards trace it for near a mile, through crags and trees, before it reaches its rocky bed at the bottom; the others are falls of whole rivers, the Mawddu and Cayne; (they are called Rhaidesy-Mawddu, and Pista'-y-Cayne,) over the tops of two rocky mountains; the former perhaps may not be above one hundred feet in height, but the latter is certainly at least an hundred yards; both of them are shaded with beautiful woods on the sides of hills, whose summits are in the clouds, and whose feet are whitened by the foam of these tremendous cataracts. It may be necessary to have a guide to see them, as they lie out of the common road.

I was

I was much struck with the situation of Mr. Oakley's house at Tany-Bwlch; at first sight it somewhat resembled Matlock Bath; but the hills in front are thrown to a fine distance, and behind the house they are covered with wood. Through a very spacious valley the river Dryryd runs, and from the tops of the mountains are frequent and not inconsiderable cataracts; indeed, most of the romantic prospects of North Wales, taken separately, are infinitely superior to those of Derbyshire; but where shall we find, within the same distance, such amazing contrast as the high polish of Kedleston opposed to the bleak horrors of the Peak?

At the distance of about three miles (the road most beautifully diversified) the scene changes on a sudden to some dark and naked precipices;

pices; at the bottom is a large rocky bason, which receives the Rhaidr-du, or Black Cataract, as it is called.

The road to Harlech afforded great variety; there could scarce be more within the compass of ten miles. For the first three we surveyed "the Happy Valley;"* we then passed by a beautiful lake, and having gained the next mountain, saw the castle, situated on a high rock, which projects into the Irish sea. It must be confessed, however, that the last two miles were rather "a stair-case path;" but I have frequently travelled for twenty miles together in the midland counties of England with more danger and difficulty. In Wales one has the pleasure of seeing that they are making daily improvements in roads.

* Vide Johnson's *Rasselas*.

Harlech stands on the north-west side of the county of Merioneth; its houses are mean. There is a good harbour for ships, but few ships for the harbour. It is remarkable only for its old decayed castle, which was defended by a British nobleman against Edward the Fourth, till an Earl of Pembroke, after almost incredible difficulties, compelled it to surrender. It has been confidently asserted, that this castle was built before Edward the First's time, and that all he did was the making some additions, especially to the fortifications; but I should be rather inclined to think that it was planned at least by Edward. A tradition goes, that the workmen, after they had got to a considerable height, were all taken off to build the castles of Aberystwith and Caernarvon; and, indeed, there are evident marks of a separation.

An unpolished people, it is observed, have little or no curiosity; I had seated myself by the fire-side in one of the houses at Harlech, without the inhabitants expressing the least surprise at it; the guide and attendants began to be rather clamorous for some refreshment, and the people at length brought them some oatmeal bread, &c.

From Harlech a fresh guide conducted me over the top of the mountain, and I found an entire good road on my return to Tan-y-Bwlch.

Leaving my little inn there with regret, I passed a dreary cloud-capt country, till I came to a road which, for near a mile, was cut through a barren rock, and finely preparative for the scene that was to open upon me. On a sudden I came upon Pont Aberglaslyn, the bridge that divides the counties of Merioneth and Caernarvon.

narvon. It consists of only one wide stone arch, thrown over a considerable water-fall, from two perpendicular precipices; beyond it is a semicircle of rock, which forms a salmon-leap, above which, in spawning time, the fish frequently attempt to lodge themselves, at the amazing height of five or six yards; they are frequently caught here in the season with nets, and sometimes with spears that are barbed for the purpose; but having passed the bridge, how shall I express my feelings! the dark tremendous precipices, the rapid river roaring over disjointed rocks, black caverns, and issuing cataracts; all serve to make this the noblest specimen of the horrid the eye can possibly behold: the poet has not described, nor the painter pictured so gloomy a retreat.

Having staid too long in contemplating this amazing pass, I posted as fast as possible over a rocky desert to gain some refreshment at Bethkelert, where there is a comfortable inn, at which I alighted, and was able to obtain a good repast. The guide to the top of Snowdon lives here.

The road to Caernarvon from Bethkelert, lies by the edge of a lake called Llyn Quillyn.

The vale of Festiniog, near to Tan-y-Bwlch, is a mixture of all that can delight the eye, or charm the traveller; a landscape painter might here take up his residence for months.

At Tan-y-Bwlch I had been informed, that I should really meet with very decent accommodation at Bettus, and might with comfort take up my abode there for an evening. As I travelled, I reflected on Burnet's

Description

Description of a part of Caernarvonshire, that it was “the fragment of “a demolished world;” and on making some slight observations to the guide on the dreariness that surrounded me, “Aye, master,” says he, “this must have been an ancient “country indeed, for you see it is “worn out to the very stones;” this remark, however, is probably rather good than new; but we are now arrived at Bettus, and the guide pointed to the house where I was to get lodging and entertainment.

The village is, upon the whole, pleasant; but finding the distance only six miles from Caernarvon, I was determined to proceed.

Within three miles of Caernarvon I was agreeably surprised with a very fine road, and a new bridge, which will open a free communication with these unfrequented regions,

and induce the curious to visit the wonders of the British Alps, in preference to the mountains of Switzerland, or the Glacières of Savoy.

I passed my evening at a very good inn at Caernarvon, and having procured an intelligent guide, returned early next morning through Bettus to the foot of Snowdon.— Having left my horses at a small hut, and hired a mountaineer to carry some cordials and provisions, with a spiked stick, about ten o'clock I began to ascend the mountain. The two first miles were rather boggy and disagreeable; but, when the prospect opened, I soon forgot all difficulties:—in the course of the two last I passed by six precipices, which I believe were very formidable; but as I was near the brink, and the wind very high, I did not venture to examine too narrowly.

On

On the summit, which is a plain about six yards in circumference, the air was perfectly mild and serene, and I could with pleasure contemplate the amazing map that was unfolded to my view. From thence may be distinctly seen, Wicklow hills in Ireland, the Isle of Man, Cumberland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, and part of Scotland; all the counties of North Wales, the Isle of Anglesea; rivers, plains, woods, rocks, and mountains, six and twenty lakes, and two seas; it is doubted whether there is another circular prospect so extensive in any part of the terraqueous globe. Who could take such a survey without perceiving his spirits elevated in some proportion to the height? Who could behold so bountiful a display of nature without wonder and ecstacy? Who but must feel even a degree of

pride from having gained an eminence, from which he could with ease overlook the nest of the eagle? Snowdon, from Caernarvon quay, is 3555 feet, according to General Ray.*

But as the level walks of life are best suited to the generality of mankind, it became necessary to consider that this was no spot where I could properly make any lasting abode, and that the return would be attended with at least as much difficulty as the ascent. Having descended a mile or two, I did not think it amiss to inquire about an exhausted mine that I saw at a distance; and I could make this inquiry with the better grace, as the guides had hitherto quite wondered at my prowess; the mine I was informed was only copper.

* See Philosophical Transactions, vol. lxvii.

At the foot of Snowdon I turned about half a mile out of the way to see a water-fall; the side-rock was exceedingly beautiful, but the cataract itself was rather contemptible, after the noble ones I had seen in the neighbourhood of Dolgelly. As the guides seemed to think a floating island, about two miles distant, was a most wonderful phenomenon, and related many singular and surprising tales concerning it, I indulged their credulity so far as to go and inspect it. The lake, as they called it, was somewhat bigger than a common duck-pond; and the island was a knotty piece of bog, which, after very heavy rains, might very possibly float in it.

On my return to Caernarvon I examined the town and castle. The town was built by the command of Edward the First, out of the ruins

of the ancient city of Segontium, that stood a little below it : it is situated between two rivers, and has a beautiful prospect of the Isle of Anglesea; it was formerly of very great account when the Princes of Wales kept their chancery and exchequer courts there. On the west side of it stands the castle, which was built to curb the Welsh mountaineers, and secure a passage to the opposite shore. In a part of it, called the Eagle Tower, you are shewn the remains of a chamber in which Edward the Second * is said to have been born; about ten years after his birth it was besieged by the Welsh, but it was

* The cradle of that weak, wicked, unfortunate Prince is still preserved; it is now in the possession of a clergyman in Gloucestershire, to whom it descended from one of his ancestors, who attended the Prince in his infancy.

afterwards repaired ; and both the town and castle had divers privileges confirmed to them by different sovereigns, down to the reign of Elizabeth ; during the last civil war they were held for King Charles, but were afterwards surrendered on conditions to the Parliament. On viewing these spacious ruins, I could only ruminate on the changes they had undergone ; to think that those walls, which heretofore resounded with acclamations on the birth of the first English Prince of Wales, should now afford shelter only to a few miserable cottages from the tempestuous blasts of the Bristol Channel !

I made several excursions into the Isle of Anglesea, the well-known seat of the Druids : this may now be considered as classical ground ; for though Mona is destroyed, and her altars abolished ; though fires

have consumed her groves, and her priests have perished by the sword, yet, like the Phoenix, she rises more glorious from decay ; her ashes have given birth to the Caractacus of Ma-son, and the fate of her bards to the inspiration of Gray.

Nothing could be more delightful than the ride from Caernarvon to Bangor ; to the right hand were Snowdon Hills, and to the left the river Menai, or, more properly speaking, the Strait between the continent and the Island of Anglesea ; I had now got into day-light and the polite world again : there had been a diversion the night before at Caernarvon, and the road was covered over with carriages.

Bangor lies at the north end of the same frith, or arm of the sea, which is the passage to Anglesea, where it has a harbour for boats. It was
once

once so large as to be called Bangor the Great, and was defended with a powerful castle, built by Hugh Earl of Chester, which has long since been demolished. The town is now of very little note, except from being the see of a bishop; the palace is neat, but deplorably situated: this is doubly mortifying in a country where every part of the neighbourhood is picturesque and pleasing.

Between Bangor and Conway I passed over the famous mountain called Penmaen Mawr. Near the summit of this mountain is a beautiful evergreen, four feet high, which has been repeatedly transplanted to Baron Hill; but, singular to remark, stripped from its native mountain, it always withered and died. The road must formerly have been very frightful, but a wall is now built to the sea side, to which it is said the city
of

of Dublin very largely contributed : to form this road it has already cost upwards of two thousand pounds.

From hence the country opens into a plain, which extends as far as the river Conway, the eastern limit of the county of Caernarvon. It rises out of a lake of the same name, and runs with a north-west course, receiving in the short space of twelve miles more than as many rivers ; so that at Aberconway, where it discharges its waters into the Irish Sea, it is full a mile broad, and capable of bringing ships of almost any size up to the town : at present, Conway bears only some melancholy marks of what it once was.

The castle still remains one of the noblest monuments of antiquity. Though built by command of the same monarch as Caernarvon, there does not the least similitude exist between





Conway Castle.

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J. Haydel Sc.

tween them, as this is far more regular. The outside is the same as in the time of Edward the First, except one tower, and that was not demolished with either battering engines or cannons, but by the people of the place taking stones from the foundation of it. Some remains of the principal rooms are still to be seen, the dimensions of which have been accurately given by Lord Lyttleton, and an elegant view of them in the Antiquities by Mr. Grose; but I had never seen the outside of this most venerable ruin to advantage, had I not walked over some polished ground about a quarter of a mile from it, which I believe belongs to a gentleman of Conway: there you see the castle finely sheltered by an oak wood; on one side *the chief of rivers* opening into the Irish sea, and on the other the mountains surrounding
Penmaen

Penmaen, with a distant country most beautifully diversified. Art and nature cannot combine to form a more various and more delicious prospect ; indeed, the whole country from Conway to Llanrhwst is a moving picture before the eye, and probably may be considered as the most beautiful part of Wales.

I could not possibly leave this part of the country without seeing the the bridge at Llanrhwst, built by Inigo Jones, and the chapel supposed to have been planned by him, which contains the rich monuments of the Guedir family. The bridge is certainly a very elegant structure, and bespeaks itself to be the work of a great architect, most probably of Jones ; for I incline to the opinion that Llanrhwst was the place of his nativity.

The

The chapel, which adjoins the parish church, was erected by Sir Richard Wynne, one of the grooms of the bedchamber to Charles the First when Prince of Wales, and was chiefly made use of for the alms-house in the neighbourhood, which was endowed by the Guedir family.

On the floor are four brass plates, with drawings of figures upon each of them in the dresses of the times; one of Maria Mostyn, wife of Roger Mostyn; another of Sir Owen Wynne, another of Sir John Wynne, and a fourth of Lady Sydney Wynne, wife of Sir John Wynne. And in the corner of the chapel a stone coffin, which was removed from the abbey of Conway, about two miles from hence, on which is the following inscription:

This is the coffin of Leolinus Magnus, Prince of Wales, who was buried in the abbey of Conway, and upon the dissolution removed from thence.

On

On each side are six carved recesses in the figure of fleurs-de-lis, which bear evident marks of having contained brass plate, and two at the bottom of the coffin.

There is now erected in the church a gallery of exquisite workmanship, which was removed likewise from the abbey; and I was at the trouble of having a large quantity of rubbish taken away from under an old staircase, that I might inspect a stone effigy, which is said to be of Hoel Coetmore, who sold the Guedir estate to the Wynne family: the word *guedir* is supposed to signify glass, and that family probably was the first who in these parts had a house with glazed windows.

I made diligent inquiry through all Caernarvonshire, and this part of Denbighshire, for the Glyder Mountain, which Gibson has particularly described,

described, and which, from its singularity (says the Author of a Tour through Wales), we more wished to have seen than the summits of either Plinlimmon or Snowdon.

“ On the utmost top of this mountain, according to the Continuator of Camden, who saw it, is a prodigious pile of stones, many of which are of the magnitude of those at Stonehenge. They lie in such an irregular manner, crossing and supporting each other, that some people have imagined them to be the remains of a vast building; but Gibson more naturally supposes them to be the skeleton or ruins of the mountain, the weaker parts of which may have been worn away in a series of ages, by the rains and meltings of the snow.”

I was

I was equally unfortunate in not being able to see this mountain ; but, in crossing the wide ferry at Conway, I by accident gained such information, that I am confident any future traveller may very readily satisfy his curiosity ; an old boatman there informed me, that he had frequently seen it—that in his younger days, indeed, it was sometimes termed the Glyder, but it was now known only by the name of Wythwar—that it was within a mile or two of a village called Clynog, and upon the shore almost opposite Caernarvon.

On my way to St. Asaph, I passed over the top of Penmaen Rofs, a steep and formidable mountain ; this is by far the worst part of the road between Holyhead and Chester : a nearer path was some time since cut along the side of the sea cliff ; but a man and horse had lately been killed,
and

and by order of the commissioners it is now entirely broken up.

The city of St. Asaph is called in British Llan Elwy, on account of its situation at the conflux of the river Elwy with the Clwyd; and St. Asaph by the English, from its patron Asaph, who in the year 560 erected a bishop's see there. The bishop of this diocese has no entire county under his jurisdiction, but parts only of the counties of Flint, Denbigh, Montgomery, Merioneth, and Salop.

The cathedral has since been several times rebuilt; having been burnt in 1402 by Owen Glendwr, it was afterwards restored by Bishop Redman; but, having suffered the dilapidations of time, was lately repaired and beautified under the direction of Mr. William Turner.

The

The bishop's palace has been entirely rebuilt by the present worthy diocesan, Dr. Bagot.

The beauties of the Vale of Clwyd, which now opens to the eye of the traveller, are not surpassed, perhaps not equalled, by any other *vale in the kingdom*. It is probably seen to the greatest advantage from the hills in the neighbourhood of Ruthin. Though near the road to Holywell, you have the best view I think of that fertile and delicious vale: it is of an oval shape, about twenty-five miles in length, and about eight miles wide in its broadest part; it lies open only to the ocean, and to the clearing north wind, being elsewhere guarded with high mountains, which, towards the east especially, are like battlements or turrets; for, by an admirable contrivance of nature, says Camden, the tops of these mountains resemble the
turrets

turrets of walls. Upon the whole, however, I think that there are other cultivated scenes in North Wales equal, if not superior. In the Vale of Clwyd, indeed, you have the lively and the beautiful; but in Merioneth, the awful and sublime.

trunk of walls. Upon the whole, however, I think that there are other cultivated farms in North Wales equal to the best in the Vale of Clwyd, indeed, you have the finest and the best in the Vale of Clwyd, the finest and the best in the Vale of Clwyd.

The first of these is the farm of Mr. Jones, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The second is the farm of Mr. Smith, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The third is the farm of Mr. Brown, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The fourth is the farm of Mr. White, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The fifth is the farm of Mr. Black, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The sixth is the farm of Mr. Green, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The seventh is the farm of Mr. Grey, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The eighth is the farm of Mr. Blue, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The ninth is the farm of Mr. Yellow, who has a fine house and a fine garden. The tenth is the farm of Mr. Purple, who has a fine house and a fine garden.

TOUR

FROM

CHESTER TO LLANGOLLEN,

WELSH POOLE, *and* MONMQUTH.

D



T O U R

FROM

CHESTER TO LLANGOLLEN

AND

MONMOUTH.

IT may probably afford some amusement to the traveller to lay before him a short description of the city of Chester.

This ancient and pleasant city stands upon the borders of the river Dee, on the west side of the county. Its lat. 53 deg. 15 min. north; and long. 3 deg. 2 min. west from London; its distance from the latter city being 182 miles.

There are perhaps few cities in Europe, which have a stronger claim

to general attention than Chester: the eye of the stranger will here find an ample field for admiration; the man of taste, who may honour it with a visit, will not depart ungratified; nor will the antiquarian search in vain for some rich and profitable treasures of investigation within its walls.

The inhabitants of Chester may be said to enjoy advantages which no other place of equal magnitude can boast of; peculiarly favoured by Providence, the situation is as pleasing as the air is salubrious.

The present degree of population is said to be about 15,000 souls, and (although not fortunate enough to be the seat of any particular or staple manufacture) is yet increasing. A stranger, on his first entrance into the city, might suppose that it is but thinly inhabited, the
enveloped

enveloped situation of the shops, which are mostly covered by rows, tending to hide a considerable portion of people from the eye. Mr. Pennant, whose respectability as a tourist is of the first rank, very concisely describes it in the following words :

“ The city is of a square form,
“ which evinces the origin to have
“ been Roman, being in the figure
“ of their camps, with four gates
“ facing the four points, four principal streets, and a variety of lesser,
“ crossing the others at right angles,
“ dividing the whole into lesser
“ squares. The walls are built on a
“ soft freestone rock, high above the
“ circumjacent country ;” and are said to have been built by the Mercian Lady Ethelfleda.

“ The structure of the four principal streets is without parallel ;
D 3 “ they

“ they run direct from east to west,
“ and north to south, and were ex-
“ cavated out of the earth, and sunk
“ many feet beneath the surface:
“ the carriages are driven far below
“ the level of the kitchens, on a
“ line with ranges of shops, over
“ which passengers walk in galleries,
“ which the inhabitants call the
“ Rows, secure from wet or heat.
“ In the Rows are likewise ranges
“ of shops,” and steps to descend
into the street.

The exploring hand of time has, at different periods, presented to the antiquarian some valuable treasures:—among these is a Roman altar, now in the possession of Mr. Dyson, erected by Flavius Longus, tribune of the victorious 20th legion, and his son Longinus, in honour of the Emperors Dioclesian and Maximinian:

In

In the 24th year of the present century, the remains of the illustrious Hugh Lupus (first Earl of Chester) were discovered in the chapter-house of the cathedral, incased with stone; where the body had lain, in undisturbed security, upwards of 1600 years.

Here it was the Caledonian King, Malcolm IV. (in 1159) ceded to our second Henry all the lands that the fortunes of war had wrested from the crown of England.

Chester was the favourite city of Richard II. who honoured it with his presence in 1397; and two years after he was lodged a close prisoner in the castle, which had been seized into the hands of our fourth Henry, who cancelled the lives of several of Richard's adherents and favourites. It has also at several succeeding periods been honoured with the pre-

sence of royalty ; in 1459 Henry VI. with Queen Margaret and her son Edward, paid a visit here ; and in 1493 Henry VII. and his consort graced the city with their presence. King William visited Chester ; and, during the reign of this monarch, it was remarkable for having a coinage of silver currency.

The city walls, to a stranger who has never had the felicity of viewing them, can entertain but a very faint idea of the convenience and pleasure which they afford : their circumference is one mile, three quarters, and a hundred and one yards.

This valuable walk had its origin probably in *warfare*, being evidently intended as fortifications in days less tranquil than the present. That potent warrior *Time* has, however, razed its towers, insomuch that only one remains to perpetuate the
hostile

hostile æra in which it was erected. This is known by the name of the Phoenix Tower, a situation remarkable for being the place where King Charles I. retired to see the battle of Rowton Moor, where his army, under Sir Marmaduke Langdale, was defeated by General Pointz.

Thus this beautiful walk, the offspring of *war*, is now solely devoted to the purposes of *pleasure* and salubrious enjoyment.

The views which the walls command are various and extensive, enriched with enlivening scenes, variegated landscapes, and delightful prospects; particularly that part leading down to the Water Tower, as it is called: WALES, from this point, opens the bosom of her country as far as the naked eye can discover. Flintshire and Denbighshire, with their majestic mountains apparently touch-

ing the horizon, have a noble effect, and highly animate the scene. In short, no walk can be better calculated, either for health or pleasure, than the walls of Chester.

Three very handsome and spacious arches, at the east, west, and south entrances, have been all finished within these few years (the two latter very recently), and nothing remains but the erection of a similar arch at the north to complete an uniformity much wanted.

The stately cathedral stands on the east side of Northgate-street; the reigns of Henry VI. VII. and VIII. are mentioned as the periods in which the greater part of this sacred edifice (now remaining) was erected. Simon Ripley, chosen abbot in 1485, built the broad aisle. The abbey, which gave birth to this see, was of such antiquity as to have been a nunnery

nunnery more than eleven hundred years ago, founded by Wulpherus, king of the Mercians, for his daughter, St. Werburgh.

The neatness of the choir, and the Gothic appearance of the tabernacle work, have a pleasing effect on the eye. The bishop's throne, which is superbly ornamented, is said to have been the ancient shrine of St. Werburgh. It is encircled by a beautiful group of small images, intended to represent saints and kings of Mercia. On the north side of the broad aisle are the cloisters, in which is that beautiful, well-finished edifice, the Chapter House, where the bones of several earls and abbots lie in peaceful security: it is fifty feet in length, twenty-six in width, and thirty-five in height. The supposition is, that it was erected by Randal Maschines, Earl of Chester;

who died in 1128. In the cloisters is a flight of steps, which led to those *sacred* retreats, the *dormitory*, *kitchen*, and *cellars*, of the venerable monks. There are eight other churches, some of which might gratify the curious, particularly St. John's.

The castle has of late years undergone considerable alteration and repair, and may be well worth the attention of the traveller. The river Dee meanders beautifully beside the town, and at about the distance of five miles embraces the main ocean, near Parkgate.

Passing through Chester, a little on the left of the road, near Belgrave, is the seat of the ancient and respectable family of the Grosvenors; the ride may be taken immediately past his Lordship's house, along the extensive park side,
return-

returning into the high road at Belgrave. About three miles farther is Marford Hill, which, for extent of prospect, is scarcely surpassed; from this place, Cheshire looks, as it has often been described, the *Garden of England*, being well supplied with wood in every part, and adorned by the richest cultivation.

Bolsworth castle and the Peckforten Hills greatly enrich the scene; and, if the weather is fine, a considerable part of Lancashire and Derbyshire may be seen from this point.

A little beyond Marford is the pleasant village of Gresford. The church is situated on the brow of a lofty eminence, over a beautiful little valley, whose end opens into the vast expanse of the Vale Royal of Chester. The church is a handsome building:—there are also some monu-

ments of antiquity in it. The bells have been denominated one of the *wonders of Wales*; for sweetness and harmony they are allowed to exceed any in that quarter. This may be attributed to the echo of the vale below, which reverberates the sound, and often gives the effect of a double peal.

In the sequestered vale, adjoining Gresford, is the cottage of Mrs. W. of Chester; its simplicity and beauty have tempted many travellers to view the scene, few of whom ever felt regret at having deviated from the common path. It is here that Contemplation may retire within herself, and for a moment forget the world and its follies; while Virtue delights to meet her retired associate.

About a mile on this side Wrexham, to the left of the road, is Acton, the seat of Sir F. Cunliffe.

The

The garden is beautifully laid out, but the prospect confined. The venerable grove, leading to the house, near half a mile in extent, has a noble appearance. To the right of the road from hence to Wrexham, there are several respectable houses, whose gardens display taste and judgment in an abundant degree.

Wrexham is a handsome and well-built town, surrounded with an enclosed and fertile country. The church is large, and was erected in the reign of Henry the Seventh. The tower is 140 feet high, and is a beautiful specimen of the florid or reformed Gothic, which taste began to prevail about the time of that king, when the windows were made broader, and less pointed at the top, their arches being more rounded at their springs, and ending with an obtuser angle.

Amongst

Amongst other monuments that reflect high credit on the sculptor, and catch the eye of the traveller who may view this church, is that of Mrs. Mary Middleton, by Roubilliac, which Miss *Seward* has thus distinguished in her verses on Wrexham.

“Bright as in Albion’s long distinguished fanes,
“Within these holy walls, she lives, she reigns;
“Her *fainted maid*, amid the bursting tomb,
“Hears the *last trumpet* thrill its murky gloom,
“With smile triumphant over *death* and time
“Lifts the rapt eye, and rears the form sublime.”

I believe there are few persons who have visited Wrexham without taking a ride to Erthig, about two miles from thence, the seat of P. York, Esq.; a place where nature has been lavish of beauties, and excellently improved by the hand of art. The gardens are very extensive, and a great display of taste
and

and judgment may be discovered throughout the whole. Perhaps Wales cannot boast of a more elegant spot. The house is a modern handsome building.

Not far distant from Wrexham, is Offa's Dyke, which is very visible on each side the road: it was thrown up by order of Offa, King of the Mercians, in the eighth century, as a boundary between his and the British territories. This dyke began at Basingwerk in Flintshire, and ended at Chepstow, being a line of more than 150 miles.

On the left hand of the road, near Ruabon, is the splendid mansion of Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, which has been long revered by that town and neighbourhood for the hospitality of its owner. The park is very extensive, and the ride to the house
picturesque

picturesque and delightful: the building is modern.

Ruàbon is but a small town, and affords no novelty or interest for the curious traveller.

Llangollen is a town romantically situated in a small dale, closely environed with mountains, which are finely varied with woods, rocks, and torrents. On the point of one of them, just above the town, are the ruins of the castle Dinas Brân, commonly called Crow Castle, situated on a steep, rising hill of considerable height, commanding a fine view of the vale; the distance terminated by a noble range of mountains gradually receding from before the eye, then they are lost in the distant azure. This celebrated spot was once inhabited by the lovely Lady *Mifanwey Vechan*, of the house
of

of Tudor Trevor. She was beloved by the bard *Hoel*.

Gray, speaking of the massacre among the bards, in the time of Edward the First, describes this scene as

"Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
"To high-born HOEL's harp, or soft Llewellyn's
"lay."

In Miss Seward's celebrated poem of *Llangollen Vale*, she thus speaks of Dinas Brân castle:

"Mid the gay towers on steep Din's Branny's
"cone,
"Her Hoel's breast the fair *Misanwy* fires,
"Oh! harp of Cambria, never hast thou known
"Notes more mellifluent floating o'er the wires
"Than when thy bard this brighter Laura sung,
"And with his ill-starr'd love LLANGOLLEN's
"echos rung."

Dinas Brân Castle and Llangollen Vale have obtained further poetical encomiums in the poems of
Sotheby

Sotheby and *G. Cumberland*; indeed there have scarcely any historians or poets lived in any period that have not paid a tribute of praise to this lovely vale. It has been universally allowed by gentlemen of distinguished taste, that *Llangollen* may rank in picturesque beauty with either Italy, Spain, or Switzerland.

The beautiful cottage of the Right Hon. Lady *E. Butler* and Miss *Ponsonby* is situated in this vale, a quarter of a mile from the town of *Llangollen*. This picturesque retreat comprises, in an extent of little more than two acres, every rural grace. Woods and mountains rise magnificently around it, but not too near to destroy that air of lightness and comfort which it breathes. Justly is this lovely villa called, in Miss *Seward's Poem*,

"The fairy palace of the vale."

These

These ladies have rather chosen to make this secluded spot their abode than to mingle in the gay scenes of life, setting an example of all that is elegant in manners, and lovely in virtue, to the surrounding inhabitants. See the elegant poem of *Llangollen Vale*, inscribed to them by Miss Seward.

The Rev. Mr. Roberts of Dinbren has lately added largely to his paternal house, situated on a noble mountain in this vale; the house stands near its craggy summit, and looks as if it had been scooped out of the rocks.

In this vale also is the beautiful and celebrated ruin of *Valle Crucis Abbey*, situated amidst a surrounding landscape of woods and mountains, sublime and awfully impressive.

“ This house, the habitation of the monks, was dissolved in 1235, and

is said to be the first of the Welsh that underwent that fate : it remained in the crown till the 9th of James the First, who granted it to Edward Wotton. There still remain the ruins of the church, and part of the abbey ; the last inhabited by a farmer. The church was built in the form of a cross, in different styles of architecture. The most ancient is that of the east end, where the windows are in form of long narrow slips, pointed at top. The window at the west end is large, divided by stone tracery ; and above is a round window of elegant work. The abbot's apartment was contiguous to the church ; there opens from it a small space, where he might stand to hear the holy offices performed below. The lower part of the abbey is vaulted, and supported by rows of low pillars, now divided into different

rent rooms. In front is a large window, with curious stone tracery, which reaches to the ground. Within seems to have stood a small staircase which led to the fratriy, a paved room above the arches."—See Mr. Pennant's History.

Miss Seward, in the Poem before mentioned, has the following striking apostrophe to this noble object :

" Say ivied *Valle Crucis*, time-decay'd,
" Dim on the brink of Deva's wandering floods,
" Your riv'darch glimmering thro' the tangled glade,
" Your gray hills towering o'er your night of
" woods,
" Deep in the vale's recesses do you stand,
" And, desolately great, the rising sigh command."

The river Dee is a noble object as seen from the bridge at Llangollen: it rages furiously down the broad, shelving, solid rock, which is worn to a kind of glossy polish by the waters of this considerable river sinking at once into one channel, scarcely
a yard

a yard broad, and of unfathomable depth, leaving the rest of the bed of the river, composed of massy and pointed rock, entirely dry, except in large floods. The concentrated stream foams with velocity through a single arch of the bridge.

“ About a quarter of a mile higher up the vale, we met with the remainder of a round column, call the Pillar of Elifeg, perhaps one of the most ancient of any British inscribed pillar now existing. It was entire ’till the civil wars of the last century, when it was thrown down and broken by some ignorant fanatics, who thought it had too much the appearance of a cross to be suffered to stand. The pillar has been a sepulchral cross, and folly and superstition paid it the usual honours: it was a memorial of the death; an improvement on the rude columns of druidical

cal

cal times, and cut in form and surrounded with inscriptions. It is said that the stone, when complete, was twelve feet high; it is now reduced to six feet eight inches. See Mr. PENNANT.

We now ascended the long narrow ridge of a mountain, which soon brought us within sight of Chirk Castle.

The ancient outward walls and towers of this castle still remain, but the court or quadrangle has at different times been made habitable: the apartments range all around it: and the principal suite of rooms are grand, and handsomely fitted up in the modern fashion.

Chirk Castle was founded by Roger Mortimer in the thirteenth century, who usurped large possessions in this country from his Welsh ward. It stands on a lofty eminence, commanding a rich and ex-

E

tensive

tenfive view over part of the counties of Cheshire and Shropshire, and nearly in the centre of a park, which the proprietor, Mr. Middleton, is now levelling and forming to the present taste.

From hence a melancholy ride, over a lonesome, mountainous heath, will lead into the vale of Llanrhaidr.

From Llanrhaidr it may be worth while to ride along the bank of the river, on the north side, for nearly five miles, to see the noble cataract, called, by way of eminence, Pistill Rhaidr: Rhaidr means a cataract, and the river is so called on account of the rapidity of its torrent; Pistill signifies a water-spout.

On our approach towards it, neither the size of the river, nor the first view of the fall, which we saw at the distance of two miles, gave us any idea answerable to our expectations;

tions; but as we advanced, a noble theatre of naked perpendicular rock opened its grand semicircle to our sight: in the middle of it fell the Piftill Rhaidr, in a large body of water, from the amazing height of two hundred and forty feet.

Powis castle stands about a mile above the town: the gardens are laid out in extensive parallel terraces, hanging over each other, in the taste introduced by King William, and bordered with fantastic yews, and other formal evergreens.

The castle is still inhabited, but has more the appearance of a long-neglected mansion than that of a comfortable house.

We crossed the Severn about two miles from Welsh Poole, over a long narrow bridge, and soon reached the neat little town of Montgomery.

On our approach to it, the town, and the castle above, situated on a high rock, the side of which, towards the town, is thinly chequered with trees, and presented a very picturesque view.

Leaving Montgomery, we soon descended into a beautiful valley, diversified with the Severn meadows and pastures, and bounded, on each side of the river, with moderate hills, generally mantled with wood.

There are no remains of the castles of Delevorn and Caerfufe, in the vicinity of Newtown; the intrenchment of the first appeared to us, from the opposite side of the Severn, in our road through the valley.

The houses are here generally framed with timber, and the intermediate parts are fenced from the weather with laths and plaster.

Newtown

Newtown is built in this manner, which, in other respects, is a neat town, agreeably situated on the Severn's bank, at the extremity of the valley before described.

Four miles carried us to the summit of a mountain, the ascent to which begins at Newtown: the path over this mountain is intricate and boggy; but we were fortunate enough to find it, though the disagreeable uncertainty of being in the right track preyed upon our spirits for many miles. We afterwards dipped into two or three Radnorshire dales, and arrived at Llandrindod.

We had many views of old intrenchments from this route; but they afforded a small relief to the tediousness of crawling through vile roads and a melancholy waste.

The wells of Llandrindod are situated in a wild extensive heath, some

spots of which are rarely enlivened with a few trees and small cultivated enclosures. The mountains bound the dreary prospect at a distance.

The lodging-house is tolerably contrived for the reception of company, and, in a fine summer, is frequently full.

We crossed the Wye at Builth, which brought us into Brecknockshire.

Builth is a small town, situated in a broad and pleasant plain; it was in this neighbourhood that Prince Llewellyn was slain in a wood, after a desperate contest between the British and English forces, at a bridge upon the river Yrvon, wherein the former at length were entirely routed.

We passed through Builth on a market-day, and our ride through the crowds in the street was attended with

with some difficulty. It at first amazed us to see the fulness of these weekly meetings in such little towns, as they appeared more like large fairs than common markets. We could scarcely conceive, from the general wildness of the country, that it could have possibly produced such numerous assemblies.

From Builth we rode over another long, lonesome, and boggy mountain. The geographer Speed gives the following description of this mountain:

“ The ancient inhabitants and
“ possessors of this shire, with the
“ rest in this south tract, were the
“ Silures, much spoken of, and
“ great opposites to the Romans,
“ whose countries were first made
“ subject by Julius Frontinus, who,
“ besides the valour of the enemy,
“ had to struggle with the moun-

“taines and straits, as Tacitus tells
“us; neither any more hard, we
“may well say, than they of this
“shire; whereof one in the South,
“and three miles from Brecknock,
“is such height and operation, as is
“uncredible: and where it not that
“I have witnesse to affirme what I
“shall speak, I should blush to let
“the report thereof passe from my
“pen.”

“From the top of that
“hill, in the Welch called Mouch
“Denny, or Cadier Arthur (Arthur’s
“Chair), they had oftentimes cast
“from them, and downe the north-
“east rocke, their cloakes, hats, and
“staves, which notwithstanding
“would never fall, but were with
“the aire and winde still returned
“backe, and blowne up: neyther,
“said they, will any thing descend
“from

“ from that cliffe being so cast, unless
“ it be stone, o some metalline sub-
“ stance ; affirming the cause to be
“ the clouds, which are seen to racke
“ much lower than the top of that
“ hill :” from which we descended
into a pleasant valley, and good
turnpike road, about five miles from
Brecknock.

Brecknock is a large handsome
town, situated on a fine rising above
the Uske. The streets are well
paved ; and it is a place of consi-
derable extent, containing some very
good houses ; and the residence of
many of the first families in the
county, which is rather unusual for
a country town : the cause assigned
is, that Brecknockshire being very
mountainous and uncultivated, and
almost destitute of villages that could
supply the tables of the gentry, such
as have not estates, or houses, in the

few rich vales of this county, are obliged to resort hither for convenience and society.

From Brecknock we turned out of the high road to a village, where are the ruins of several Roman edifices, and the remains of one hot and two cold baths; the hypocaust, or subterraneous stove, by which the former was heated, being almost entire: within a few yards is a tessellated pavement, in tolerable preservation; but the dies are uncommonly small, and the colours very faint. The ground, for some distance, is strewed with Roman bricks and tiles, several of them having the impression of letters.

The Sugar-loaf Hill, so called from its conical shape, is a remarkable high mountain in the vicinity of Abergavenny; and a very conspicuous and striking object from the high

high lands of Gloucestershire, which are distant more than seventy miles.

The turnpike now follows the current of the Uske, being commonly within view of it, through a delicious vale, which is diversified with pastures, woods, and mountains; the lands are wholly cultivated to the best advantage, and are well inhabited, rich and beautiful.

The environs of Abergavenny, in Monmouthshire, are rich and beautiful, and, like the rest of the vale from Brecknock, abound with the most charming variety of landscape. The prospects are terminated at proper distances with mountains, among which, at the opposite sides of the town, Skirid vawr and Blorench raise their conspicuous heads.

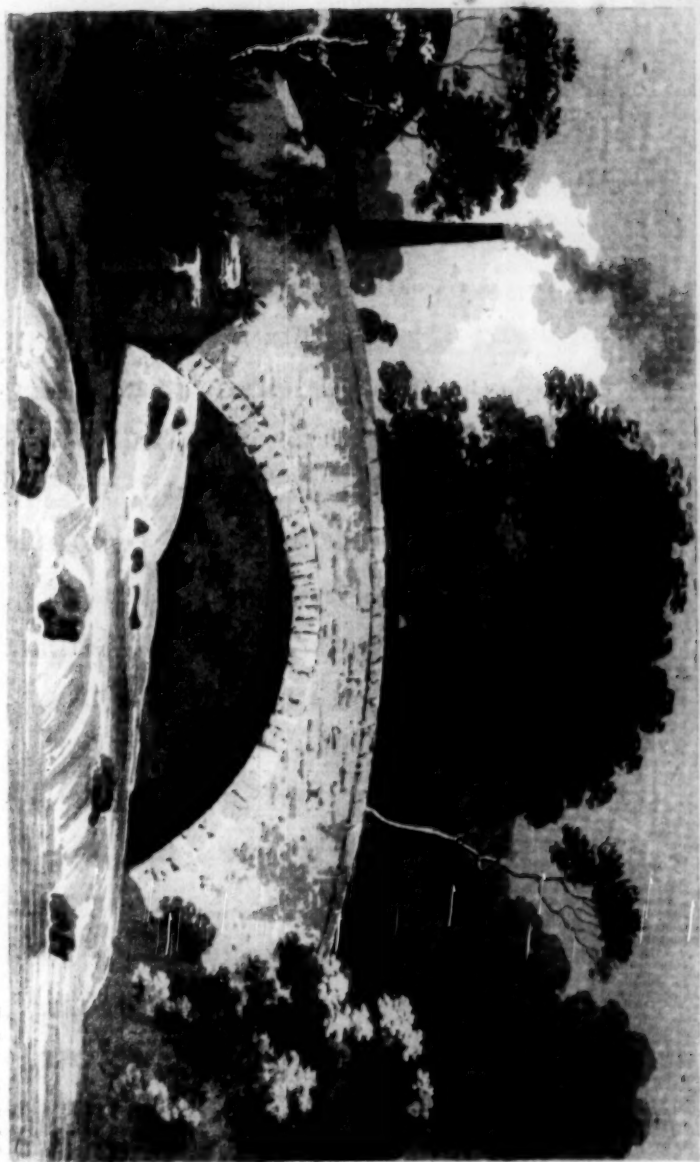
The town has a few good houses scattered in it, but in general the streets are narrow, ill paved, and

ill built. Some of the walls, and part of the tower on the keep, are the only remains of a once flourishing Norman castle.

Just above the little parish of Llandewi, four miles below Llantony, is a remarkable mountain, the sides of which have, at different times, been broken from it, and now lie in immense fragments underneath, having left a long perpendicular precipice more than 100 feet high.

We could learn no particulars about these separations of the rock, though, from the apparent freshness of some of the fallen pieces, the last does not seem to be very ancient.

We crossed the Uske, and pursued our route to Pontypool, which you enter over Pontymoill (*vide* Plate), a bridge of one arch, with the park-lodge on one side, backed by a beautiful hanging wood. Pontypool is



Samuel del.

Paul & Wm. Birch

Philadelphia 1845



is a clean town, rendered famous by its manufactory of japanned ware. The houses are of stone, whitewashed, covered with slate stone, the river Avon running rapidly on one side of the street, turning in its course several mills. Pontypool park and house belonging to Capel Hanbury, Esq. adds much to the beauty of the town. There are several very valuable iron forges on the banks of the small river Avon, which runs at the foot of Pontypool; and the neighbouring hills contain abundance of excellent coal, which is disposed of at the pit for three-pence per horse-load, or two hundred weight; and it may be conceived, that the cheapness and proximity of this article are very advantageous to the iron manufacturers, and point out the eligibility of their situation,

At

At the distance of seven or eight miles from hence is Caerlion; whose ancient and indisputable splendour is not attested by any existing monuments: there are no vestiges to be seen of the superb buildings, the spacious amphitheatre, and numerous baths that were constructed by the Romans towards the close of the first century, when Caerlion became a place of consequence, as the station or head-quarters of the second legion, commanded by Julius Frontinus; but so lately as five or six years ago, there remained near the present town the defences of a strong camp, consisting of a deep ditch, and a lofty mound or rampart, which has been since levelled, and the ground is now in a state of cultivation: but it may be disputed whether these fortifications were of Roman, Saxon, or British construction; as it is recorded
that

that Caerlion was defended, for some time, by a garrison of Saxons, against the attacks of Prince Arthur, to whose victorious arms it was, however, eventually surrendered; and *here* that renowned British monarch was crowned, and kept his court.

The country between Pontypool and Monmouth is generally well cultivated, and rather pleasing; yet did not appear to us so strikingly beautiful as it had been represented: but, perhaps, the enchanting prospects in the vicinity of Brecknock, with which we had so recently been charmed, might occasion an apathy to scenes less attractive of admiration.

In our way to Monmouth we passed through Uske, where is a small castle; the town is watered by the river of the same name, which runs from hence to Newport, and empties
itself

itself into the Bristol Channel a little below the town.

The country still continues to wear the same rich dress as about Abergavenny, even to Monmouth, with this difference only, that it is now more enlarged, and unconfined with mountains.

Ragland castle, which lies partly in the road, is a magnificent ruin; the magnitude of it, and the large remains, are uncommonly striking.

This castle was built by Sir W. Thomas and his son William, Earl of Pembroke, beheaded at Banbury. It came into the noble family of Worcester by Sir Charles Somerset's marrying Elizabeth, the grandchild of the said William, Earl of Pembroke, heir to his son William, Earl of Huntingdon, and heir-general to all the Herberts in England.

This

This Sir Charles Somerset was the first Earl of Worcester of this line.

Camden calls Ragland a fair house of the Earl of Worcester's, built castle-like.

The extensive outworks were added by the Marquis of Worcester, in the civil wars; and he fortified them in such a manner, that he was enabled to hold Ragland for King Charles till his imprisonment at Holmby.

This castle had the honour of being the last which surrendered to the all-powerful forces of the Parliament.

It is greatly to the honour of the Duke of Beaufort, the proprietor of this castle, that he has endeavoured to preserve from destruction all the remains of religious and military architecture of which he is the possessor.

Tintern

Tintern abbey, Chepstow, and Ragland castles, all in this county, are instances of his laudable veneration for antiquity, which deservedly excites the gratitude of every curious traveller, who must often lament, in his Welsh tour, that this noble example is too rarely imitated.

The Editor having been favoured with the following portrait of Welsh hospitality and manners, gives it as a specimen of the magnificence of those days.

List of the Household, and Method of living, at RAGLAND CASTLE, by the Earl of WORCESTER, in the Reign of CHARLES I. 1641.

AT eleven o'clock in the forenoon the castle-gates were shut, and the
tables

tables laid; two in the dining-room; three in the hall; one in Mrs. Watson's apartment, where the chaplains (Sir Toby Mathews being the first); and two in the housekeeper's room, for the ladies' women.

The Earl entered the dining-room, attended by his gentlemen.

As soon as he was seated, Sir Ralph Blackstone, steward of the house, retired. The comptroller, Mr. Holland, attended with his staff, as did the sewer, Mr. Blackburne; the daily waiters, Mr. Clough, Mr. Selby, Mr. Scudamore; and many gentlemen's sons, with estates from two to seven hundred pounds a year, who were bred up in the castle; my lady's gentlemen of the chamber, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Fox.

At the first table sat the noble family, and such of the nobility as came there.

At

At the second table, in the dining-room, sat knights and honourable gentlemen, attended by footmen.

In the hall, at the first table, sat Sir Ralph Blackstone, steward; the comptroller, Mr. Holland; the secretary; the master of the horse, Mr. Dolowar; the master of the fishponds, Mr. Andrews; my Lord Herbert's preceptor, Mr. Adams; with such gentlemen as came there under the degree of a knight, attended by footmen, and plentifully served with wine.

At the second table in the hall (served from my Lord's table, and with other hot meats) sat the fewer, with the gentlemen waiters and pages, to the number of twenty-four.

At the third table, in the hall, sat the clerk of the kitchen, with the yeomen

yeoman officers of the house, two grooms of the chamber, &c.

Other officers of the household were, chief auditor, Mr. Smith; clerk of the accounts, George Whit-horn; purveyor of the castle, Mr. Salisbury; ushers of the hall, Mr. Moyle and Mr. Cooke; closet-keeper; gentleman of the chapel, Mr. Davies; keeper of the records; master of the wardrobe; master of the armoury; master grooms of the stable for the war-horses, twelve; master of the hounds; master falconer; porter, and his man.

Two butchers; two keepers of the home park; two keepers of the red deer park.

Footmen, grooms, and other menial servants, to the number of 150. Some of the footmen were brewers and bakers.

Out Officers.

Steward of Ragland, William Jones, Esq.

The governor of Chepstow castle, Sir Nicholas Kemys, Bart.

Housekeeper of Worcester House, in London, James Redman, Esq.

Thirteen bailiffs.

Two counsel for the bailiffs to have recourse to.

Solicitor, Mr. John Smith.

This once magnificent castle is now in ruins, but the remains of it are well worth the observation of travellers. Among other parts now standing is a flight of steps, which appear ready to fall, yet so curiously put together as to

be

be ascended without danger; part of the hall is standing, and presents to the view a beautiful picture of ancient architecture.

Monmouth is a large and handsome town, and well inhabited by gentry. It stands on the banks of the serpentine Wye; but that river, though almost constantly pleasing, and ornamental to the circumjacent country, is not, however, so charming or so romantic here as at Chepstow. The church is a handsome structure, its lofty spire being remarkable for lightness. The castle, which flourished even in the time of William the Conqueror, has been since famed for giving birth to our English hero, Henry the Fifth.

be ascended without danger; part of the hall is standing, and presents to the view a beautiful picture of ancient architecture.

Monmouth is a large and handsome town, and well supplied by gentry. It stands on the banks of the River Wye, about half way through a small country of hills and ornamented to the landscape. Country is not however so charming as to resemble that of a Champagne flow. The church is a handsome structure, its lofty spire being remarkable for height. The castle which it surmounts is the ruin of William the Conqueror, and has been long since for ever a ruin.

William the Conqueror, and his son, were buried for ever in the ruins of this castle. Henry the First, who was the first of the Plantagenets, was also buried here.

The ruins of the castle are now a garden, and the walls are used as a garden wall. The ruins are now a garden, and the walls are used as a garden wall.

TOWNS.

T O U R

FROM

H O L Y H E A D

TO

CHESTER.

F



T O U R

FROM

HOLYHEAD TO CHESTER.

WITHIN two miles of Towyn y Capel is Holyhead, which is a small town, seated on a noted and safe harbour, and appears to have but little to boast of worthy the notice of the traveller, other than the remains of some Roman walls, which are to be seen in the churchyard. It is greatly resorted to by passengers to and from Ireland, and is the station of the packets, five of which are constantly employed,

which enliven this otherwise retired place.

Aberfraw in the island of Anglesea was the seat of Howel Dha, or Howel the Good, Prince of Wales, about the year 940. Here was always kept one of the three copies of the ancient code of laws; a second was kept at Dinevawr, and a third by the doctors of laws.

All traces of its former splendour are effaced. The buildings being in those rude times constructed of timber, accounts for the cause of grandeur which once attracted and commanded notice, being now lost to the eye.

This barren country appears to be ill cultivated and poorly inhabited, though it is presumed the hand of industry might turn it to account.

At twelve miles and a half from Holyhead is Gwindw. This inn,
for

for comfort and good accommodation, stands unrivalled, perhaps, in all Wales.

The greatest quantity of copper ore of any in the kingdom, is produced from the Paris mine; this body of mineral was discovered in 1768. The greater part of the ore is of good quality, and the vein is thought to be upwards of twenty yards thick, and the length unknown. It is well worthy the attention of any traveller to pay this wonderful mountain a visit.

At a small distance from Gwindw on the right is Plasnewyd, the noble mansion of the Earl of Uxbridge, which is pleasantly situated on the bank of the river, protected on three sides by venerable woods. The view of the river is very fine, and when the vessels are sailing, they much enliven the scene. In the woods

are some remarkable druidical antiquities. The house is built in the Gothic style; the prospect in front is bounded by the mountains of Caernarvonshire.

Upon the whole, the productions of Anglesea are great, though planting and plantations are but few, and they mostly confined to gentlemen's seats. Dr. Johnson, in his tour to the Hebrides, very much upbraided the Scotch for their oversight in this particular object, and more than once was disposed to be out of temper; as the tree to be produced, said the Doctor, "requires no other labour but to put the acorn in the earth."

Were it possible that our forefathers could take a view of this island in its present state, it is not an improbable conjecture whether or not they would be able to trace any vestige of what they once so well

well knew. Here we lament plantations are wanting ; there was a time when its groves were held sacred—such is the solemn defacing hand of Time.

The road to Bangor Ferry affords a fine view of the British Alps, the mountains of Snowdon ; and many others, display a rich scene of the awful and sublime.

At the distance of five miles to the left is Beaumaris, a small corporate town, but little trade, neat and well built ; one street is upon the whole handsome. The new town-hall and assembly-room, lately built, are great acquisitions to the town.

A more charming situation cannot well be imagined than the beautiful bay of Beaumaris, formed on one side the Anglesea coast, rising into little hills, and well wooded to the water-side. Under the direction of Ed-

ward the First, in 1295, the castle was founded, which is an elegant structure.

Each of Edward the First's three castles, viz. Caernarvon, Conway, and Beaumaris, differs in form; the latter has the least claim to beauty. The exterior walls are guarded by ten strong round towers; within is a square of 190 feet, or, as Mr. Grose expresses it, a square with the corners canted off. The great hall has five windows in front, is 70 feet long, and twenty-three and a half broad: within the walls, on one side, is a beautiful chapel, the sides ornamented with Gothic arches; a narrow gallery runs within the whole space of the castle walls.

At a small distance from the town, on the shore, stand the remains of the Friars, founded by Prince Llewelyn; it was consecrated by
Howel,

Howel, Bishop of Bangor, who died 1240 (see Leland's Coll.). This once religious spot, of late became, by purchase, the property of Lord Bulkeley. At the distance of two miles is the priory of Penmon; the remains are the ruins of the refectory, and the church: part of the last is in present use. From Baron Hill, the seat of Lord Bulkeley, you have a delightful view of the town and castle of Beaumaris, with the ships that pass from Liverpool to Ireland, together with an extensive prospect, over the sands, of the mountains from the river Conway up to Snowdon. The garden and grounds are laid out with much taste, and display great variety. There is likewise a numerous collection of the Snowdonean plants, well worth the attention of the botanist.

Bangor Ferry is twelve miles from Gwindw, where the traveller will find good accommodation. It was in contemplation a few years ago, to build a bridge across the Menai, near this place; and Mr. Golborne was consulted upon the practicability of the plan, who gave in an estimate of the expense, to which the Caernarvon people objected, urging it would destroy the navigation of the river. The best time to cross the stream is at low tide; the ferry is perfectly safe, but at times rough and unpleasant when the wind blows easterly.

About ten miles distance from Bangor is Nantfrankon, a small fertile vale, inclosed between magnificent wild rocks, of uncommon grandeur, and finely broken near their centre. From hence is a noble fall of water, which, after passing over the rocks, glides through the vale in the most fanciful

fanciful windings. The accidental lights which are happily thrown by the interposition of the clouds, on the cavities and masses of rock, produce an awful and sublime effect. After climbing over these rude rocks, you reach Ogwar Pool, a very picturesque piece of water, surrounded on one side by rock, on the other by gentle slopes. Large masses of stone which fall from the rocks are happily dispersed in different parts of the water. Many parts near Pool are in the utmost state of perfection, and for natural wildness not equalled.

Bangor is a small market town, seated between two low hills, in a valley opening to the bay of Beaumaris; it has nothing to strike the eye particularly, though much improved of late years. It is an episcopal see, and boasts of much antiquity.

Willis informs us that St. Daniel, son of Dynawd, Abbot of Bangor, first established here a college for the instruction of youth, and support of the clergy of those parts. The cathedral was destroyed in 1071, and rebuilt previous to King John's invasion, 1212. The present church is Gothic, and probably was built in the time of Henry the Seventh. It has received considerable improvements by Dr. Warren, Bishop of the diocese, who, with much taste, and great expense, has modernized the old palace. This worthy prelate has much distinguished himself by his munificence and liberality to the neighbouring clergy and poor of his diocese.

Some remains of several Welsh princes, with bishops and deans, lie interred here.

From

From hence is an extensive prospect to the east of Beaumaris, the Ormes-heads, and Penmaen-mawr, which forms the eastern boundary of the entrance into Beaumaris bay. Cod-fish, salmon, oysters, and many other fish, are in great plenty along the whole Welsh coast; beef, mutton, and lamb, small and sweet. The Welsh mutton has always in the London market been considered a rarity, and sold very dear.

At a small distance from Bangor is Llandegai, where the church makes a good figure. It is finely situated on a lofty bank above the Ogwen, and commands a beautiful view; it is a small neat structure in form of a cross, with the tower in the centre, supported within by four arches. It contains the remains of Archbishop John Williams, a native of Conway.

A little

A little below the church is the village of Aber Cegid, by the side of a little rivulet, which passes from hence into the sea.

It is supposed a thousand persons find employment here, and that the sale of slates produces near to twenty thousand pounds *per annum*.

The quarries, from which the slates are taken, lie at a few miles distance, and are the property of Lord Penrhyn, to whose liberal spirit, and acknowledged acquaintance with the advantages of society, this country owes particular obligations.

Upon the left hand stands Penrhyn, an ancient house once beautifully embosomed with venerable oaks. The entrance into the park is through an elegant gateway resembling a triumphal arch: the situation elevated and pleasant, commanding a pretty view of Anglesea and the coast of Ireland,

Ireland, and bounded on the other side by the hills of Snowdon.

On the site of the house formerly stood a castle, the residence of Roderic Molwynog, Prince of Wales, who reigned about the year 720. A great wood formerly inclosed the house, which the improving taste of modern times has in a good degree removed. The extensive plantations now made, will, in a short space, change the otherwise dismal aspect of the country, and create a sort of paradise in Wales.

It may not be amiss to inform the antiquarian that the *ancient drinking-born* is in the possession of this family.

At a little distance we observed a house on the left hand, built in a most happy style of architecture, and sheltered by a flourishing plantation, disposed with great taste on a spot which

which once was covered with fragments of rock and stones. Lord Penrhyn's agent has, by laudable efforts, made this otherwise rude spot assume new features, that must attract and charm the traveller.

The river, which was once rugged, and almost unbounded in its course, is now confined within a small compass; and the different heights of the stream form pretty cascades and salmon leaps, which are seen from the front of the house. The common road, leading over the bridge, crosses the view, which is called Lime Grove.

At the distance of six miles from hence is Aber, a village, with a church, pleasantly situated at the edge of the Lavan Sands. A little up the river from Aber Bridge, is a waterfall, well worthy the attention of the traveller; the river rushing
over

over a perpendicular rock full 200 feet in height, into a deep pool at the bottom ; and after a heavy rain is an object uncommonly grand. Here is also a neat house and a most comfortable stage between Bangor and Conway.

The situation is charming ; the pleasing groupe of mountains, swelling one above another, contending as it were for pre-eminence, and at some times covered with snow, rise behind the house, whilst Anglesea displays her shores in the front, richly embellished with gentlemen's seats.

Here formerly stood a castle or palace, belonging to Llewelyn the Great. Some foundations are still to be seen round the summit, which, in digging traces of the building, have been found, and which commanded this pass into the mountains. Llewelyn

welyn the Great was Prince of North Wales; he married the princess of England, and died in 1240; his coffin is now in the Gwydier chapel at Llanrwst.

Grouse, sea-fowl, and woodcocks, are here in plenty.

As you ride from Aber, over Penmaen-mawr, and up the hill called Sychnant, to Conway, it affords a variety of prospects and rich scenery.

Near this town the rocks of slate again make their appearance, extending to Penmaen-mawr and the rest of the Snowdon chain.

We were very glad to find a dangerous steep precipice had given way to a fine turnpike road, rising in a gradual ascent over the once to be dreaded hill of Penmaen.

This mountain is supposed to be about five hundred yards high; the present road is cut on the side of the hill,

hill, probably one hundred yards above the sea. A strong wall is built upon arches to the road to support it, when any defect might appear in the rock. Above which the mountain rises with awful aspect, craggy, bleak, and barren, almost sufficient to awe the traveller, and spread terror over the mind, to one not accustomed to behold nature in her naked and rugged form.

Until this commodious road was made, to which the nobility and gentry of Ireland largely contributed, persons travelling here were under the necessity to stay till the tide went out, that they might cross the sands under Penmaen-bach; or ride some miles over a bank of loose gravel, cast up by the tide, and ascend Sychnant, rather a steep rugged precipice, to go to Conway, at which place we arrived in the evening.

Conway

Conway is a small town, fortified in the ancient style, and its towers and walls are still in good preservation, though sufficiently dilapidated. A more time-worn town is scarcely to be seen within, or a more delightful one without. The situation is on a steep slope to the verge of the river; here a mile broad at high water. The castle was built by Edward I. in the year 1284. A more beautiful fortress perhaps never arose; its form is oblong, placed on all parts on the verge of the precipitous rock; one side is bounded by the river, another by a creek full of water at every tide, and charmingly shaded by hanging woods; the other sides face the town. Within the castle is a great hall, 130 feet long by 32 feet broad; the roof lofty, and supported by handsome arches, where the king held his levees.

In

In the thickness of the wall of one of the towers, is a small elegant recess, with a bow window and a groined ceiling, supported by neat pillars.

From the appearance of these once splendid apartments of kitchens, cellars, ovens, &c. one may be induced to encourage the idea that the possessors lived in luxury and splendour; still history informs us that King Edward I. gave particular orders that *clean straw* should be put in the King's chamber every week. Comparing our own situation with this august sovereign, how thankful ought we to be for the benefits of civil society and national refinement!

The best view of the superb structure of Conway Castle, is, perhaps, from O. Holland, Esq.'s pleasure-ground, though it appears

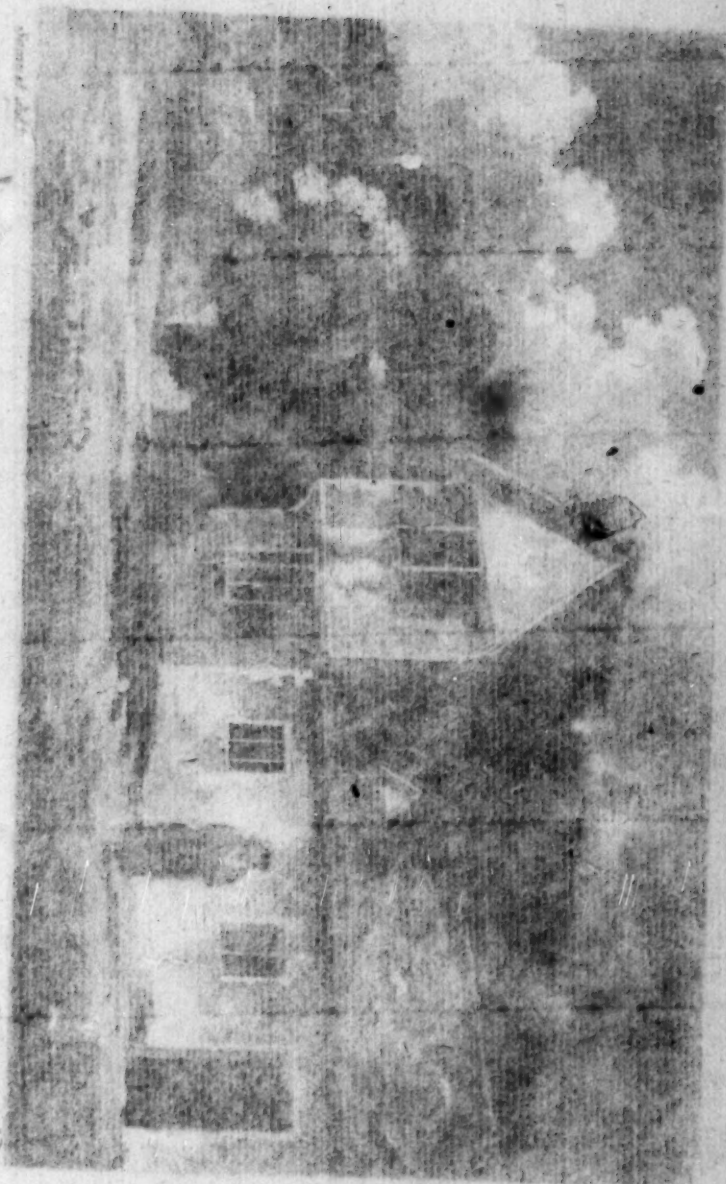
to

to great advantage from the middle of the stream in a boat.

In the street, not far from the Abbey, is a very old house, with a singular window, and several coats of arms sculptured beneath, one of which is an eagle pouncing a child. This house is called the *College*. It is said that Edward I. took this abbey into his hands, consequently might establish here a place for the instruction of youth. (See Plate.)

The trade of Conway is but inconsiderable; it exports a few slates and some copper from the Llandidno mines, and lead and calamine from several mines on the Caernarvon side of the river.

Like a variety of other parts of Great Britain, the mode of travelling through Wales has been much changed of late. Travellers going from Chester to Holyhead for Ireland,



to great advantage from the middle of the stream in a boat.

In the street, not far from the Abbey, is a very old house, with a singular window, and several coats of arms sculptured in stone, one of which is an eagle nursing a child. This house is called the *College*. It is said that Edward I. took this abbey into his hands, consequently might establish here a place for the instruction of youth. (See Plate.)

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Sumner del.

Cottage at Conway.

Underwood sculp.



land, were once obliged to take a guide to see them safe over the almost trackless mountains in Flintshire and Denbighshire, which is now performed with ease and safety, in less than a one third of the time it formerly took. Wales, in many respects, as to accommodation for travellers, as well as improvement in the roads, within late years, may be reckoned among the first of the kingdom.

Through the arched gateway, at the foot of the town of Conway, Bodscallen and Dyganwy Castles cannot fail attracting the eye of a stranger in an uncommon manner.

Of the latter castle some small parts still remain; it stands upon a high rock above the river, and has to boast of being the residence of the princes of North Wales. Dr. Powel, from the authority of Welsh historians,

historians, says it was destroyed by lightning, about the year 816. Camden adds, that he believed it to have been the ancient *Dictum* under the later emperors. It was rebuilt, and considered as a strong post, about 876. By the same historians we are told it was again restored to consequence by the Earl of Chester in 1098. It was again destroyed by Llewelyn ap Jorwerth, and rebuilt by the Earl of Chester in 1209. King John made a disgraceful retreat with his army from this place in 1211. On the top of a low hill, near Bryniau, is an ancient tower worth inspecting.

At a small distance, upon an eminence, stand Marl and Bodscallen; the former was destroyed by fire a few years back; the latter is one of the seats of Sir Roger Mostyn, the respected knight of the shire of Flint. It is a place of great antiquity,

quity, being mentioned in the Record of Caernarvon, but was inhabited in far earlier times. The situation is fine, amidst surrounding woods, and commands a beautiful view. Gloddaeth is another seat of the Mostyns, placed on the slope of a very extensive hill or lime-stone rock, clothed with successful plantations, commanding a beautiful and extensive prospect. The walks may be considered among those of the first rate in this island.

A great part of the present house was built by Tho. Mostyn, Esq. in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. In the library is a beautiful copy of the first and second books of *Froissart*, a MS. on vellum, with illuminations: the frontispiece represents the author on his knees, presenting his book to Edward the Third. (See Pennant.)

The face of the country here puts on a more agreeable form, planting and agriculture being considerably encouraged.

The distance from Conway Ferry to Abergele is ten miles. In many parts the road is confined, rough, and incommodious; but the very dangerous precipice of Penmaen Rhos no longer remains to terrify the traveller; the road is on the back part of the hill.

From hence you pass by Gwrch; on the right hand is a mountain of lime, which it is thought cannot be exhausted; great quantities are shipped to Liverpool and other places.

“Not far from this place the ill-fated Richard the Second was treacherously betrayed into the hands of his enemy Bolingbroke, and carried prisoner to the castle of Flint. There are antique drawings of the unfortunate

nate monarch's captivity at Conway, and of his interview with the usurper at Flint castle, in the curious collection of Strutt's Regal Antiquities." (See Tour from Holyhead.)

The land here is fertile, and produces good corn, the valuable manure, lime, being at hand.

Abergele is a small town on the edge of Rhuddlan Marsh, much frequented in the summer season as a bathing place, and has also some considerable fairs for cattle.

We were glad to find the road to Chester was not, as formerly, over this marsh, which was always more or less uncomfortable.

The castle of Rhuddlan was built in its present manner by Henry the Second, 1157, and stands a noble object on the left, at the mouth of the river Clwyd. It is built of red stone; the present ruins

consist of a square area, surrounded by a strong wall, which you enter by a gateway between two round towers; at the opposite corner are two round towers with a small gate; at each of the other angles is a round tower, and the whole encircled with a ditch, faced on each side with stone. King Edward the First held his parliament here; the parliament house still remains. Powell says that Rhuddlan Marsh is celebrated for the battle fought there in 795, between the Saxons and Welsh, when their monarch, Caradoc, fell in the conflict.

The famous King of Mercia, it is said, was slain here also; but the Saxon Chronicles place his death the year before that battle.

From Abergele you ascend the hill to the pleasant village of St. George,

George, which affords a good prospect.

Mr. Hughes, one of the company, of the copper mine at Paris mountain, lately purchased Kimmil house, and has now built an elegant mansion near this pleasant site. Near to Kimmil, Sir Edward Lloyd has also built a neat elegant house. A short ride from hence brought us to St. Asaph, a small town and bishop's see, built on a steep side of a hill, and claims considerable antiquity. (See page 45 for an account of this place.)

At a few miles distance from Holywell, a little to the left of the road, is Downing, the residence of Mr. Pennant, the British historian and naturalist, a gentleman whose extensive writings have been universally admired, as well as his private virtues.

Downing is situated in a small valley; the house is built of stone, and has a very pretty appearance; the grounds are laid out with much taste, and covered with fine timber, descending in a gentle slope to the banks of the Dee. Mr. Pennant has a valuable library, with a large collection of beautiful drawings, &c.

From an eminence in the road, we had a good view of the broad estuary of the Dee, marked by many a mile of bare sand that is covered at high water; also large woods, which give shelter and beauty to Mostyn Hall.

Holywell is ten miles from St. Asaph, now a considerable market-town in North Wales, and very populous. On the side of the hill stands the famous well of *Saint Winifrede*, whose spring almost exceeds credibility, as it is calculated

to

to throw up *twenty-one tons of water every minute*, and is certainly the finest in these kingdoms. In times of Romish superstition, history acquaints us that this was the resort of pious and noble pilgrims, who had great faith in its miraculous healing powers; and if we cast our eyes up to the arched roof above the well, ample testimony now remains, that some, even in our own days, have experienced the efficacy of its virtues; one instance of which comes within present memory. I well remember, when a school-boy, wantonly teasing a poor man, who had, by a severe cold, lost the use of his *limbs*, and had two *crutches*. The expense of his maintenance many years on the parish, at last induced the overseers to send him to Holywell, to try the effects of that surprising *Well*; and, however singular it may appear, before

two months had elapsed, he returned, leaving one crutch behind. The next season he renewed his visit, and came home with a stick, leaving his other crutch; since which period he has provided for himself, without the alms of the parish. Bishop Fleetwood has written a volume on the legend of St. Winifrede, whose head being cut off by Prince Cradocus, we are told was miraculously reunited by the holy prayers of St. Bruno. It is said the spring of water instantly flowed from the spot to which the head rolled.

During the reign of pilgrimages, nothing but a corn mill or two, the property of monks, found employ for this beneficial stream—How great the contrast now? Here are several manufactories of considerable importance, belonging to the cotton twist company, which, while they
render

render the stream less tranquil, afford employment to hundreds of poor people, in both the town and neighbourhood. There is little doubt but that this town will, in a few years, be by far the greatest in Wales; the inhabitants are now calculated to be 5396 souls.

Upon the stream of the said well is the copper and brass work which supplies the principle of motion to the great variety of mechanical force here employed. The works belonging to the Anglesea companies are, in fact, a continuation of the same processes that are carried on at the Paris mountain. The works occupy a large extent of ground. The refined copper is received from Swansea, &c. in solid blocks or pigs, then passes between large iron rollers, which reduce it to a thickness to be applied to a variety

of purposes. Here are likewise corn-mills worked by this stream, and the banks are likely to be covered with works partaking of its benefits down to the level of the sea, which is a mile in length. Here is likewise a small coin of halfpenny and penny pieces in circulation, with the Druid's head stamped upon them, and made current by the company. Above the well stands the church, dedicated to St. Winifrede; a little beyond which is a hill called Bryn castle, which is narrow and rather steep on the sides, projecting at the end over the little valley. It is rather singular that in Doomsday-book no mention is made of either the chapel, church, or well, though townships of less note are named, such as Brunford, &c. The town of Holywell, at the beginning of the present

present century, was very inconsiderable; the houses, in most part, thatched, the streets unpaved, and even destitute of a market.

The ancient abbey of Basingwerk, which stands beside the town, is highly deserving of notice. This was, in the reigns of Henry the Second and Edward the First, a place of much note, as the abbots held their parliament here, and discharged other public duties.

The ride from Holywell to Hal-kin, and from thence to Northop, will, no doubt, much gratify the traveller; it commands an extensive view across the river, of the distant hills of Lancashire, and of Worrall and Parkgate on the opposite side. In the distance of ten miles there are few places that will afford greater variety of prospect.

Dear scene! that stretch'd between the silver arms
Of Deva and of Mersey, meets the main,
And when the sun-gilt day illumines its charms,
Boasts of peculiar grace, nor boasts in vain.

Miss Seward.

The country round this place is well wooded, and, upon the whole, in a high state of cultivation.

Near to Halkin are Lord Grosvenor's valuable lead mines.

Northop is a neat country village, the church of which makes a good appearance: this township was held after the conquest by R. Rhuddlan. The roads in this neighbourhood have received considerable repair; some bridges have likewise been erected, and the hills lessened, so as to make them more commodious to the traveller. Upon the flat below, at the foot of the river Dee, is Flint, a town and castle which will be men-

tioned hereafter, in the tour from Shrewsbury to Flint.

Harwarden is five miles from Northop, a small clean town. The castle, the property of Sir S. Glynne, forms a picturesque object, soaring above the woods: this fortress, it is said, very frequently changed its masters, being sometimes in possession of the English, and at other times recovered by the Welsh. In the unfortunate reign of Charles the First, this castle suffered the fate of many others, as its broken towers fully evince. General Mytton took it 1645. Camden informs us that on the conquest this castle was comprehended in the vast grant made to Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester. In 1264, Llewelyn, Prince of Wales, had a conference at this place with Simon de Montfort, the Earl of Leicester,

Leicester, when they established peace between Cheshire and Wales.

There are now but small remains of this fortress; a round tower appears to be preserved with care, whilst the other parts present a mournful picture of decay. A little below the castle, on a delightful spot of ground, is the noble mansion of the late Sir John Glynne, which stands a conspicuous object beside the road, built under his direction, now the residence of his grandson, Sir Stephen Glynne. Sir John, with laudable foresight, made large plantations in and about the place, converting what was but an unprofitable waste, into a flourishing wood.

In the centre of the town is the rectory, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Crew. A more charming situation cannot well be conceived; and what

is

is equally as desirable, a better living, which, we were informed, owes its increase, in a tenfold degree, to the large inclosures of Saltney Marsh, an extent of land of many hundred acres. This marsh was, a few years back, dangerous to pass, particularly in winter, when a considerable part was flooded. There is now a good turnpike road, and cultivation and fertility smile on the traveller. There are many coal-pits in this neighbourhood, which afford employment to a numerous poor, who journey with their asses laden to Chester, knitting as they walk beside them, setting a laudable example of industry to the sluggard and the beggar. Quitting this marsh, which is about three miles over, we ascended a rising ground, which soon brought us to the city of Chester.

T O U R

FROM

CHEPSTOW TO SWANSEA,

ST. DAVID'S, CAERNARVON,

AND

RUTHIN.



CHEPSTOW to SWANSEA,
AT DAVID'S CARRIAGE.

AND

RETURN.

T O U R

FROM

CHEPSTOW to SWANSEA, &c.

CHEPSTOW leads through an agreeable neck of land, washed on each side either by the Severn or Wye.

The shores of the Wye are bold, rocky, and woody ; but the capital object which catches the eye, on the approach to Chepstow, is the castle, founded on a high perpendicular cliff, rising from the river, and extended along the edge of it.

In

In descending the hill which leads down to Chepstow bridge, a most enchanting scene suddenly presents itself to view—the Wye is its chief ornament—nothing in nature can be more beautiful than the steep and romantic banks of that river, thickly clothed with wood from the surface of the water to their summits—every here and there a rocky cliff juts out, and the effect is truly fine and striking. The noble and extensive ruin of Chepstow castle appears majestically in front, and is a magnificent object. We could not obtain any authentic information with regard to its antiquity ; but tradition says it was repaired in the thirteenth century, by Richard, Earl of Pembroke. This castle stands on a perpendicular cliff on the western side of the Wye, and commands the town and passage of the river ; on which accounts it

was

was formerly considered as a place of strength and consequence. It was besieged and taken by Oliver Cromwell; which is the only memorable occurrence in its history.

The whole fortress occupied several acres, and the ruins of it are still very considerable. The principal gateway has a venerable aspect, and, though of Norman origin, and the oldest part of the whole structure, is nearly perfect.

The parish church of Chepstow is part of the old priory, and the west entrance is a handsome arch of Norman architecture, ornamented with the mouldings peculiar to that people.

In the neighbourhood of Chepstow is the celebrated PERSFIELD, late the property and residence of Mr. Morris, who expended a large sum of money in various improvements
and

and embellishments, which are a monument of his taste.

Tintern Abbey is situated on the banks of the Wye, a few miles above Chepstow. No monastical ruin in Great Britain presents a more beautiful perspective than the inside of the abbey church. The present remains are carefully preserved from further destruction, and the fallen ornaments of its once vaulted roof are so disposed, in moderate piles, that all their sculpture, which is remarkably sharp, and well executed, may be inspected with the utmost facility.

The body of the church is in its original level; and though the pavement has long since been removed, I scarcely lamented the loss of it, as the substituted turf, clean and entirely free from weeds and briars, has perhaps a better effect.

This

This abbey was founded in the year 1131; but I should imagine the present church was begun several years afterwards, as it is an elegant specimen of the chaste Gothic, and constructed upon one plan, and in one style.

It was dedicated to God and St. Mary of Tintern, by Walter Fitz-Richard de Clare, Lord of Caerwent and Monmouthshire. William, Earl of Pembroke, and Marechal of England, married the daughter and heiress of Richard de Clare, surnamed Strongbow, and gave divers lands and privileges to the abbots and monks hereof, who are of the Cistercian order, obliging them to pray for their souls, and those of his and his wife's ancestors. Richard de Bigod, Duke of Norfolk, added to these benefactions. It has been famous for the tombs and monuments of several
great

great persons, principally the afore-said Richard de Clare, called Strongbow, and Walter, Earl of Pembroke, who, in the dispute between the houses of York and Lancaster, was taken prisoner in Banbury fight, and beheaded, and buried here. The length of this abbey, from east to west, is seventy-seven yards; in breadth, from north to south, fifty-three yards. It has twenty-four pillars, and eighty-four windows.

The views from the Wye, between Chepstow and Tintern, are exceedingly magnificent: the rocks on each side seem to be from 300 to 600 feet high; they are sometimes perpendicular and wholly naked, and sometimes the very precipices are covered with woods, from the river's brink to their summits, for continued miles.

It

It is impossible to travel through this part of the country without being captivated with the many delightful prospects it affords.

At Caldecot is the shell of a castle, which was built in the Norman age, as the mixture of the circular and Gothic arches sufficiently proves.

Caerwent is at present a miserable village, and has nothing to manifest its Roman greatness, excepting some ruined walls on the south and west sides.

At the village of Christ Church, which is situated on a commanding hill, about three miles from Newport (on the Chepstow side), we were detained a considerable time by the loveliness of the surrounding scenery—the river Uike winding through a narrow valley, washing the town of Newport, and continuing its course, to where it forms a

junction with the Severn, confined all the way by luxuriant hills, which are finely contrasted with the distant black and sterile mountains in the back ground—the Severn, almost as high up as Berkeley, and lower down than where it assumes the name of the Bristol Channel, shaping its rapid course through the spacious and delicious vale of Gloucestershire—the embouchure of the Avon—King-Road, with the shipping lying at anchor and under sail—and, to conclude, the Flat and Steep Holmes, which, together with the Channel, bound the view on that side.

The country is here pleasantly inclosed, and near Caerleon the views are extensive and fine.

This city is of great antiquity and fame, and was strongly defended by the Romans with brick walls. Many remains

remains of its ancient magnificence are still extant ; such as splendid palaces, which once emulated, with their gilded roofs, the grandeur of Rome ; for it was originally built by the emperors, and adorned with stately edifices ; immense baths ; ruins of temples ; and a theatre, the walls of which are still standing. Here we still see, both within and without the walls, subterraneous buildings, aqueducts, and vaulted caverns. The city is pleasantly situated on the banks of the navigable Uske, and surrounded with woods and pasture.

Various antiquities have, in different ages, been discovered among the ruins of this city. Camden and his continuator have preserved a considerable catalogue of them ; and even at this time the fund is not exhausted.

The Roman walls are still visible, but the facing stones have long since been removed for private uses. Near the centre of a field, adjoining to the west wall, is the theatre (or more properly the amphitheatre) mentioned by Giraldus.

The form of it only remains, no traces of its walls being now discoverable: the diameter of the area is very large, and is bounded with a high circular entrenchment of earth.

There is very little extant of the castle, which is of a later age; the keep is remarkably lofty, and on climbing up the steep sides of it, we blundered upon a curious piece of Roman antiquity.

It was part of a circular stone, flat on one side, and convex on the other, 27 inches in diameter: on the flat surface is represented in bas relief a female

female figure sitting: one hand inclines downwards, and a small dolphin is sporting in the palm of the other, which is extended. There is a broad foliage round the edge of the stone, which, resembling a myrtle-leaf, serves as a border to it.

The figure is indisputably intended for a Venus; and both the design and execution of it, when perfect, in my opinion, far surpassed the general specimens of sculpture which the Romans left in Britain.

The present Caerleon is a melancholy contrast to the ancient, and has scarcely a decent house in it.

Newport is a considerable town, and was formerly strengthened with a small castle, situated on the river's brink, the shell of which is still pretty entire.

The country between Newport and Caerdiff is ornamented by the seats of

Sir Charles Tent and Mr. Morgan; and watered by the rivulets of Ebwith and Romney, whereof the latter separates the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan.

The bridges over the Uske, both at Newport and Caerleon, and over the Wye at Chepstow, are built upon exceeding high piles of wood: they are floored with boards, which are always loose, but prevented from slipping by small tenons at their ends: the precaution of having the boards unfixed is not unnecessary, as the tides in these rivers sometimes rise to a stupendous height, and would otherwise blow up the bridges.

A new stone bridge of five arches is now building over the Uske at Newport, by Messrs. Edwards, by contract, for 10,165*l*. Since it was begun, Mr. Reveley has been appointed as engineer to give his opinion

nion of the construction of it, and has made several reports to the magistrates on the defects—but no alteration has been made in consequence.

Uske is situated on the river of the same name, over which is a bridge of several arches: the town is built in the form of a square, with the gardens in the centre; the bridge is at one corner, the castle at the next, the church at the third, and the town-house at the other, which is a neat modern building, where, in general, the county meetings are held; the church appears to be but half the size it was formerly, when it was the priory church, the gateway to which remains, and part of the prior's apartments, which are now a farm-house. The castle is a large building on a small eminence, part of which is also converted into a farm-house.

The roads had hitherto been perfectly good ; and though the turnpike is not continued to Caerphily, yet it is a very passable coach-road.

The whole ride is pleasant, at the foot of high hills generally cultivated to their summits ; and from Machen, the river Rhymny was our guide to Bedways bridge, which carried us into Glamorganshire.

The town of Caerphily consists of a few humble cottages, and is surrounded with mountains, ruder and less cultivated than those which we had passed.

The castle, including the out-works, is of an immense size ; part of the present building was constructed in the year 1221, the ancient castle having been razed in 1217.

This part, which is included within the inner moat, is a noble ruin ;
the

the hall in it is, excepting the roof, perfect, and is a grand room, being a double cube of 34 feet in breadth; the form of its Gothic windows, and of the clustered flying pillars between them, from which sprang the vaulted arch of its roof, has a noble appearance, and grand effect.

It is remarkable, that the east wall, on the south side of the principal entrance, is concave, between the large upright buttresses: these buttresses resemble towers, and had battlements on their tops, to protect the intermediate walls.

The vestiges of a draw-bridge appear on the west side of the original castle, which connected it with a large piece of high level ground, embanked round, the walls of which embankment are still visible; and on the farther side of it are the remains of a round tower.

Spenser held this castle for King Edward the Second, and was besieged in it, by the Queen's and the Barons' forces, in the year 1327. According to Camden, Spenser defended it so manfully that his enemies were soon compelled to retire.

The road from Caerphilly to Lantressent is chiefly on the beautiful banks of the furious Taafe, until you cross the river at Pont y Pridd, or the new bridge over the Taafe; but as we were to return by part of it to Caerdiff, we took a guide over the mountain of Eglwyfillian, which parish stands near the top of it. The prospects from the mountain were extensive, but they scarcely compensated for the badness of its descent towards the bridge.

The Pont y Pridd consists of one arch, from bank to bank, over the rapid Taafe, whose flooded torrent drives

drives every thing before it that offers resistance ; as two stone bridges, in this very spot, have fatally experienced.

This arch is perhaps the largest in the whole world.

It is a segment of a circle ; the chord of it is 140 feet, and the height of the key-stone, from the spring of the arch, is 34 feet.

About half a mile above the bridge is a natural fall of the Taafe : we saw it in a still season ; but though the fall is not very deep, yet the broken rocks in the river, the craggy precipice from which it descends, and the sylvan ride towards it, form a pleasing picture.

Nothing can be more agreeable than the first six or seven miles from Pont y Pridd towards Caerdiff. The road passes along the shady bank of the raging Taafe ; the country

is finely diversified with the inequality of the mountains on each side of the torrent ; two of them, finely clothed with wood, seem almost to close together ; between which, under the small ruins of Castle Coch, we passed into the vale of Glamorgan.

Glamorgan is styled, with great propriety, the Garden of South Wales, and extends from Caerdiff towards the west about twenty-five miles in length, and from the sea-shore eight or ten miles in breadth. It is somewhat remarkable, that this charming valley has for its foundation a bed of rock, at two, or, at most, three feet from the surface of the soil.

Caerdiff is a populous but ill-built town, nor is there any thing very pleasing in its environs ; its situation is on a low flat, near the mouth of the Taafé.

It has only one church, but this is spacious, and the architecture of the tower is exceedingly light and beautiful.

The old walls of Caerdiff are very extensive, and the ruins of them are still considerable. They were probably built, as well as the large octagon tower on the keep of the castle, by the first Norman invaders.

The most remarkable occurrence in the history of Caerdiff castle is, that Robert, eldest son of William the Conqueror, and the right heir of his father to both England and Normandy, was, after undergoing various vicissitudes of fortune, at length confined in it by King Henry the First; and here he languished, deprived of his sight, for the term of twenty-six years, when death released him from the unnatural cruelties of his brother.

Llan-

Llandaff stands on a gentle elevation; it is but a small village, though a bishopric.

The remains of the old cathedral are very beautiful; the door-cases are all of Norman work, and well executed; the rest of it is an elegant Gothic, though it was constructed so early as the year 1120, and is perhaps one of the oldest specimens of Gothic in the whole island.

The modern cathedral, on which large sums have lately been lavished, is a medley of absurdities: part of the ancient nave is included in it, but the rebuilder has added Roman architecture, mixed with a capricious kind of his own, to the solemnity of the Norman and Gothic.

The ruins of several castles appear in the neighbourhood of Cowbridge; and St. Donat's, particularly, deserves attention.

Cow-

Cowbridge consists of one broad handsome street.

Journeying towards Pile, we left Wenny castle on our right hand, and Ogmore on our left, both within view of the turnpike.

From our cleanly little inn at Pile, we made a walking excursion in search of the remains of Cynfeg castle, which are more than two miles distant from it.

Scarcely a wall of this castle is now to be seen, and the face of the country must have suffered great revolutions from the winds and inundations, since Fitzhamon, the first Norman invader, chose to fix his residence on this spot.

This fortress was built on one single mount, about the size of a common keep; and there appear no vestiges of other fortifications near it.

it. It is now surrounded with naked sands, blown up into irregular heaps, and subject to alterations by every storm. The present situation gives no idea of its having been proper either for pleasure or defence.

Near Margam, in a lane leading from thence towards Cynfeg, we saw one of the stones noticed by Camden; it is now placed upright, and the characters of the sepulchre are still perfectly legible.

The situation of Margam abbey, founded by William, Earl of Gloucester, grandson to Fitzhamon, is at the foot of a high mountain, wholly covered with wood. The orange trees in the garden grove, are supposed to be the finest in all Britain.

In the street of Margam is an ancient cross, which, with its pedestal, is covered with a profusion of sculpture

ture representing knots and fret-work. A few characters are seen near the two figures on it, but I was not able to decypher them, from the years that had worked their decay.

The abbey church is a Norman edifice, in the best taste.

The road is now continued under the mountains, near the Severn shore, and passes close to some large copper-works to Aberavon, where it crosses a stone bridge of one arch to Briton Ferry, which crossing, we rode along the beach for a few miles, and were ferried over the Tavey into Swansea.

The landscape about Briton Ferry is exceedingly rich : the mountains, the river, and its woody banks, form a beautiful back-ground and contrast to the bold and craggy shore, and the broken insulated knolls near it.

Just

Just above the ferry is the seat of Mr. Vernon, situated in the centre of this enchanting view.

The sea breezes from the Bristol Channel have no influence over the verdure of the trees on this southern coast, which flourish as well here as in the more inland parts.

Swansea makes a handsome appearance from the approach to it, being built near the mouth of the Tavey, on a semicircular rising bank above it. The town is populous, and the streets are wide; it carries on a considerable trade in coals, pottery, and copper.

Such is the profusion of coal and limestone in Glamorganshire, that lime is the general manure of the whole country.

The remaining walls of Swansea castle are finished with an open Gothic parapet, through the arches
of

of which the water ran from the tiles.

The high roads through South Wales are, in general, uncommonly good; but that between Swansea and Landino is an exception to the remark, being exceedingly rugged and stony; we did not hesitate, however, to quit this very indifferent road, for one that is almost impassable, which leads over several steep mountains, to the castle of Kacr Kenner; being resolved to inspect a fortress, whose natural strength and peculiarity of position demand the attention, and excite the admiration of the curious, and more especially of the military traveller. In our way thither we had a glimpse of Clenchere, the sequestered residence of a gentleman, whose name has escaped my remembrance. It lies in a deep but verdant dell, agreeably shaded with trees,

trees, and watered by a limpid stream, called the Kenner. This is a very picturesque scene, and appears the more charming from the contrasted sterility and nakedness of the mountains in which it is embosomed. Kaer Kenner is distant only three miles. The remains of this castle stand on the summit of a rocky, exalted, and isolated precipice; perpendicular, and consequently inaccessible, on three sides, and very difficult of approach on the other. The walls inclose only a small space; but there is an excavated passage of considerable extent, leading to several apartments, and to a reservoir, which amply supplied the garrison with water. I should conceive, that this castle must have been almost impregnable.

During the greatest part of our dreary ride from Swansea to Landino,

the

the black mountains were in sight on the right hand; and at Kaer Kenner we were within a few miles of one of the most considerable of them, that terminates the ridge in Caermarthenshire. They are covered with fern and dark-brown heath, which give them an appearance (and particularly at a distance) that well agrees with the epithet *black*, by which they are distinguished from the neighbouring mountains. It may be imagined, that a country so wild and barren, and that offers so little to the industry of man, is thinly peopled: the shepherds are, in fact, its only *human* inhabitants; every now and then you see a lonely cottage, hanging on the side of a precipice, naturally calling to mind the pleasures and advantages of social intercourse, so strikingly contrasted with

with the unvaried and melancholy occupation of the shepherd.

Leaving Swansea, we crossed over the tedious and dreary mountain of Bettŷs, in the midway towards the Llandilo vawr (from the extremities of which there is a rich and extensive prospect), and descended into Caermarthenshire.

Llandilo vawr is a small town, hanging on the declivity of a hill washed by the Towy, which takes its name from the river that glides through it, and washes the town of Landino. This place has two recommendations, its delightful situation, and a very good inn.

According to the history of Wales, by Carādoc of Lhancarvan, the last decisive battle between the armies of Edward the First and Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, was fought near
this

this town, when the King's forces gained a complete victory; in consequence of which, the unfortunate Prince, soon after, near Builth, lost both his power and life.

This victory put a final period to the Welsh independency, in the year 1282, since which time the principality has continued subject to the crown of England.

Close to the town there is a beautiful seat belonging to Lady Denevor (the widow of the late Mr. Rice). The house is placed in the centre of a charming park, which runs down to the Towy; the woods are venerable and striking; and the groups of trees are scattered over a variety of ground, and disposed with great taste on the banks of the river. On the summit of a pretty eminence, about half a mile from the house, an old tower

tower rears its head above a thicket, and has a pleasing effect.

The ruins of Dinevawr castle * stand on the high prominence of a beautiful semicircular hill, entirely mantled with wood, and which, with a regular sweep, precipitately descends to the Towy.

The castle, which Giraldus saw, was razed to the ground in the year 1194, six years after his itinerary ; but it was soon rebuilt.

From the extent of the present ruins, I cannot conceive it to have been so much a castle of strength and grandeur as a small palace calculated for the more refined and social pleasures.

The ruins are now inclosed in the beautiful park of Newton, belonging to Lady Denevor.

* To this castle Dyer alludes in his poem of Grongar Hill.

The castle of Caraig-cennin stands four miles S. E. from Llandilo, towards the black mountain: it is most strongly situated, on the point of a lofty, craggy, insulated rock, three sides of which are wholly inaccessible: it is surrounded at moderate but unequal distances with mountains; and the roads leading to it are, even now, but barely practicable. The fortress, of which there are great remains, does not occupy an acre of ground; for, indeed, the rock would not admit of more.

This was doubtless a British building; the remaining ruins confirm the supposition, as there is not the least appearance of Gothic about them.

The well in this castle is a singular curiosity.

I am aware that there is no mention made of this castle in the history

of Caradoc of Lhancarvan till the year 1248, when Rhys Fychan won it from the English, to whom his mother had some time before privately delivered it.

We now continued our route through a charming country, perfectly cultivated on each side of the turnpike.

We had a view on our left hand of the ruins of Durslon castle, situated on a large natural knoll, near the Towy; and soon after passed through Abergwilly, where is a seat of the Bishop of St. David's, but which has nothing to recommend it, except the beauty of the neighbouring country.

Caermarthen is a large and handsome Welsh town: I speak by comparison; for, in general, the Welsh streets are narrow and winding, and the

the decent houses are too often intermixed with the meanest cottages.

Part of the castle is now used as the county gaol; but there is nothing remarkable in the ruins of it.

According to Giraldus, the walls of Caermarthen were raised with brick, but I could not discover the smallest traces in the remains of them; though the redness of the stones at first deceived me, and inclined me to be of his opinion.

A long stone bridge crosses the Towy from this town; but, like the common fashion of the country, it is inconveniently narrow.

The beauty of the country now diminishes, and there is little worth attention in the road, till we arrive at Narbeth, a small town, with some remains of a castle, in Pembroke-shire. We had, indeed, a distant view, on our right hand, of the remarkable

mountain called the Ragged Rocks, the summit of which appeared circular, and like the stupendous ruins of a castle wall.

About two miles forward we crossed the Cleddy, near which, on the right hand, appear the remains of Lauhaden castle, and on the left the fine woods of Slebach.

It is peculiar to Picton castle that it has always been inhabited. The present possessors are the Philips's, by whom it has been modernized. It is esteemed one of the capital houses in the principality ; but the strongest curiosity to examine modern architecture will cause little interruption to a tour through Wales.

Haverfordwest is a large irregular town, built on the declivity of a hill, which is so steep towards the river, that the back windows of the ground floors

floors in one street frequently overlook the roofs of another.

The castle ruins are considerable, and present a grand object to the approach from Narbeth.

As we were soon to traverse an intricate country, we thought it prudent to take a guide part of the road from Haverfordwest, to prevent the difficulties which might otherwise attend us.

We made an excursion from Haverfordwest to Harbarston Haikin, situated on the broadest part of Milford Haven.

The little harbour of Harbarston is generally full of vessels, which export from it corn, coals, and lime-stone; and we found no difficulty in hiring a convenient boat to carry us to Pembroke.

We sailed across the haven of Milford, so well known for its magnitude

nitude and security. It appears like an immense lake; for the mouth not being at any distance visible, the whole haven seems land-locked: the mouth opens to the southward, and the haven extends itself eastward.

There is nothing bold or picturesque on the shores of it; they are neither mountainous nor woody: the land round the haven consists of small inequalities of ground, pretty well cultivated, though sometimes varied with large furze brakes.

The view of Pembroke and its castle, from the river, is very grand. The town is situated upon the ridge of a long and narrow rock, gradually ascending to the highest point, on which stands the castle, at the edge of the precipice. If I may compare small things with great, it resembles

fembles much the situation of Edinburgh.

The castle is a Norman structure, mixed with the early Gothic: the principal tower, which is uncommonly high and perfect, has even its stone-vaulted roof remaining.

This fortress was built by Girald, constable of Windfor, ancestor of Cambrensis.

We journeyed to see Carew castle and Tenby, in this neighbourhood, the view of which particularly gratified us.

We returned with the tide to Harbarston, and by the same road to our quarters at Haverfordwest, through an inclosed but unpleasant country, near the little parish of Haroldston, which may possibly have taken its name from King Harold.

From Haverfordwest the road leads through a miserable country, leaving

a ruined tower of Roche castle on the right hand, and winds down to the beach of Niwegal, about the midway towards St. David's: it then traverses a mountain, and descends to the romantic little harbour of Solvath, which is a cove, surrounded with high and barren rocks.

A street of small cottages, one of which is the inn, composes the city of St. David's. I had so little notion of its being the bishopric, that I inquired in the street how far it was to St. David's. The reader will easily give me credit, when he hears that the palace and cathedral stand below the town, and cannot be seen from it.

The bishop's palace, which was founded in the reign of Edward the Third, is now an immense ruin; several of the apartments are uncommonly

monly large, the walls of which are still entire.

Edmund, Earl of Richmond, father of Henry the Seventh, lies under a raised tomb near the middle of the choir, and at a little distance from it is the monument of Owen Tudor.

There is something simple and pleasing in the idea of strewing flowers and evergreens over the grave of a departed friend, which is the universal custom in these parts.

The western coast of Wales is mountainous, with steep or perpendicular cliffs towards the Irish sea. In crossing the few rivers in this dreary part of our route, we had a sharp descent from one mountain, and a quick ascent to another. The road is commonly within view of the sea, and sometimes of the Irish coast.

Few inclosures are to be seen in the neighbourhood of St. David's.

I made a short excursion from thence to see *y maen sigl*, or the shaking stone, mentioned by Gibson: it lies near the most westerly point of St. David's head. Its shaking was certainly a *lufus naturæ*, as it is a fragment fallen from the upper rock.

This stone has long since been immoveable, but never could be so curious as the famous rocking stone at Stonehenge in Wiltshire.

The weight of the two stones in question appeared to me to be nearly equal.

Fisgard stands upon the point of a mountain, from which there is a steep descent (cut from the precipice) to its little harbour, at the mouth of the Gwyne.

Within two miles of Newport, a poor town, situated under the ruins
of

of a small castle, the road passes, close to the remains of four or five Druid sepulchres or altars; the stones are large, and were originally supported with four upright pillars, like the legs of a table: they are all within the circumference of about sixty yards, and one of them is nearly perfect.

These monuments lie on the left hand of the road in an enclosed field, which, in English pronunciation, is called Daertinman.

The old cross, mentioned by Gibson, remains in the church-yard at Nevern; but we could not find either the inscribed stone, on the north side of the church-yard, or the inscription in the church; nor could we learn any intelligence of them.

The church at Nevern has no pavement in it; and the frequent burials, in the manner of St. David's,

have raised the ground within, seven or eight feet higher than it is without.

This parish is pleasantly situated on the banks of the river Nevern, and backed by some fine shady hills: we ascended one of them, and, by a bad and intricate road, arrived at Cardigan, having passed through the dirty village of St. Dogmael, formerly famous for its abbey, some ruins of which still remain, and which the river Tyvy divides from Cardiganshire.

Most of the ancient monuments in these parts have lately been destroyed and converted to private uses.

Cardigan stands upon a gentle eminence, rising from the Tyvy, over which there is a handsome stone bridge. Part of the outward walls of the castle is still remaining, but the

the materials within have long since been removed.

We rode from hence to Llangoidmore, and, sending our horses from thence round to Llechryd bridge, followed a beautiful shady path cut from the precipice of the Tyvy bank for two miles. This river runs in a broad and translucid stream between the sloping hills, which are about two hundred feet in height, and wholly covered with wood, from the water's brink to their summits. This sylvan scene is only once interrupted by a lofty, naked, and projecting rock, on which stand the romantic ruins of Cilgarran castle, and which, by its singular contrast to the rest of the view, gives a finishing to a delicious landscape.

We met our horses at Llechryd bridge, a little below which are some large

large and expensive works, lately erected by a company for the purpose of making tin plates.

From these works the beauty of the river diminishes; but we were informed, that, at some distance upwards, the Tyvy is still more picturesque.

The town of Llanarch consists of a few straggling cottages, but the name served us as a guide to Aberystwyth: for we soon found it necessary to be previously acquainted with every place in our route, as we could seldom get any farther intelligence from the few people we met on the road than to the next town or village. But, indeed, the intricacies of this ride were frequently relieved by proper direction posts.

We now left a deep and shady dale on the left hand, and soon after descended to Aberaron.

From

From hence the shore becoming more level and agreeable, the road quickly passes by the intrenchment of a small castle, half of which has long since been washed away by the sea.

About two hundred yards on the left hand of the road, and two miles beyond Llanrusted, are two supposed Druidical sepulchral monuments; they are upright single stones, and one of them, when perfect, measured eleven feet in height above the ground, and five feet six inches in breadth.

Aberystwyth is situated on an easy elevation, in the midst of a broad vale, at the mouth of the river Ystwyth. All the towns beginning with Aber, denote their being near the mouth of a river; for Aber, in Welsh, is a smaller stream, discharging

charging itself into a greater, or into the sea.

Part of the old wall of the town is remaining, but all the facing stones have been taken away. The castle has undergone the same fate, and the ruins of it are now trifling, except one, a Gothic tower, the shell of which remains for a sea mark.

We learn from Powell the historian, that the present castle was founded by King Edward the First, in 1277, a few years before his complete conquest of Wales.

From Tal y bont, our late long *tædium* began to find some relief from a cheerful sylvan scene, which conducted us by the sides of two waterfalls, near Gwellyn-gwin bridge, to the banks of the Dovy.

The prospect before us is now enchanting; while the striking contrast

traft of the present object, to the melancholy waste we have lately left, makes us more sensible of the pleasing transition.

The navigable Dovy runs through a broad expanse of rich meadows, encircled with a majestic chain of superb mountains, the slopes of which are beautifully chequered with corn-fields, pastures, and large woods.

Machynlleth lies in a small verdant plain, surrounded with mountains. It stands in the extreme west angle of Montgomeryshire, and the bridge from the town carried us into Merioneth.

Leaving Machynlleth, we soon found ourselves in a truly Alpine valley; the rapid torrent, roaring over a bed of broken rocks, and now and then interrupted by immense fragments, from which it fell in considerable cataracts; the woody and exalted
preci-

precipices on each side of the river, and the mountain brooks continually rattling about us ; formed a miniature picture of the romantic road between Aigues belles and Mount Cenis. Towards the extremity of this beautiful scene, the huge mountain of Cader Idris presented its naked, craggy, and prominent cliff, full to our front. I never saw an object more awfully sublime ; it extends more than half a mile in length, and is at least a thousand feet high.

The road passes under part of this gloomy and tremendous precipice, on the right hand, within sight of a large lake on the left, and close to the brink of a smaller. It then crosses an arm of Cader Idris, and with a quick descent of two rocky miles ends at Dolgelly. Part of this latter path leads through a thin oak wood, which hangs over an impetuous.

ous torrent, foaming down a rugged declivity as steep as the road.

The town of Dolgelly is finely situated upon the Wnion bank: the vallies around are richly interspersed with woods and decent houses, while the mountains bound every prospect from the town at irregular distances.

There appears some spirit in the flannel trade in this neighbourhood, which extends its busy influence for many miles round the country.

We now passed near the poor remains of Vennar Abbey, or Kinner, according to Speed, and crossing the river Mawddach, or Maw, soon traversed another Alpine vale.

About five miles from Dolgelly (a few large Scotch firs on each side of the road marking the spot) we turned upwards on our left to see a waterfall behind a small house of a widow

widow Vaughan. This cataract is broken into two broad parts; the upper descends about thirty-five feet upon a small craggy ridge, and the lower about twenty feet, into a romantic basin, encircled with perpendicular or impending rocks: a fine wood surrounds it, and some of the largest trees project their shady branches over the precipice of the cascade.

Returning to the high road, we soon crossed a bridge, under which the torrent rattled from the above cascade down a deep declivity, and through large disjointed fragments towards the river.

We quitted the valley two miles farther, and ascended a barren and dismal mountain: the road continued lonesome and melancholy for several miles, but at length conducted us to
a com-

a comfortable little inn at Tan y Bwlch.

These remarkable cataracts are each of them the fall of a whole river, and situated within a quarter of a mile of one another.

In an excursion from Tan y Bwlch towards Harlech, we deviated a little from the road, to see the Rhaidr du, or black cataract, so called from the colour of its water.

This is a fall of the rivulet Velenryd, about forty feet in depth: a regular basin, semicircled with rock, and surrounded with a thin grove, receives it. The rest of the valley is poor and uncultivated.

As we approached Harlech, the road became scarcely practicable; it was literally a stair-case path, worn on the side of a steep precipice of a craggy and disjointed mountain.

We

We had as yet seen no castle so perfect as this at Harlech; the shell is entire. I have no doubt but that the present fortress was erected by Edward the First. It is a noble square building, with a round tower at each corner, and one on each side the entrance; it was completed before the year 1283. (See Ayloffe's Welsh Calendar.) It is situated on a very high rock projecting in the Irish sea.

In order to avoid the goat track of our morning ride, we returned over the sands of the Traeth Bychan, which are passable only at low water.

It is remarkable that we had hitherto never deviated from the true line of our route, when alone, and that we seldom failed of doing it when we employed a guide.

Our present Ciceroni from Tan y Bwlch conducted us wrong both to
and

and from Harlech ; and on our return we were obliged to have guide upon guide, before we ventured to cross the sands, which are by no means difficult when known, but which, from their shifting and quickness, are intricate and dangerous to strangers.

We were induced by the cleanliness of our little inn, and the attentive complacency of the landlady, to sleep three nights at Tan y Bwlch. This is a single house, in the parish of Festiniogg ; and about three miles below it, the river Dryryd divides the inn from the parish church and village of Maynturogg ; it lies in a deep and narrow valley between the mountains, which are but moderately clothed with wood, excepting near the house, where the sylvan walks, amid the craggy precipices, are extremely picturesque.

At

At a little distance from the inn, on a woody mountain's side, is a pleasant seat of William Oakley, Esq.

We now traversed a desolate and cloud-capt country; but as it happened to be low water, we avoided some of these mournful mountains by descending on the sands of the Traeth Mawr, which carried us to the Pont Aberglaslyn, which divides Merioneth from Caernarvonshire.

This bridge is one wide stone arch, and is built over a roaring waterfall, from two perpendicular precipices.

Here we paused—the grandeur of the scene before us impressed a silent admiration on our senses.—We at length moved slowly onward, contemplating the wonderful chasm. An impending craggy cliff, at least 800 feet high, projects from every part of its broken front stupendous rocks of the most capricious forms,
and

and shadows a broad translucent torrent, which rages like a cataract, amidst the huge ruins fallen from the mountain.

The disjointed fragments of the opposite declivity, crushing their mouldering props, seem scarcely prevented from overwhelming the narrow ridge, which forms the road upon the brink of the flood.

Leaving with regret this sublime and unparalleled pass, which continues for near a mile, we pursued our route through the miserable town of Bethkelert, over a rocky desert at the foot of Snowdon, and by the edge of two lakes, one of which commands attention from its size and the scenery around it, to Llyn-quellyn bridge, under which is a picturesque waterfall, from whence there is a good road through the small village of Bettws to Caernar-

K

von,

von, of which town you have a beautiful view before you enter it; and a turnpike road of nine miles brings you to Bangor, a small town with a few decent houses scattered about it, the best of which belong to the church. The old cathedral was burnt by Owen Glendwr, about the year 1404: the present was built by Bishop Dennis in the reign of Henry the Seventh.

A vale begins now to open, which gradually spreads itself into the pleasant and rich country around Caernarvon.

I entirely agree with Mr. Barrington, that the plans of the Welsh castles, founded by Edward the First, were borrowed from the Asiatic fortresses which that prince had seen in the Holy Land, because they are precisely similar to many which

which Le Brun hath copied and inserted in his valuable travels.

We crossed the Menai Ferry at Beaumaris, and a four miles ride over the sands at low water, where the true path was sufficiently pointed out by posts at proper distances, carried us to the Irish turnpike at Llanāber in Caernarvonshire.

We had a glimpse, for a few minutes only, of the summit of Cader Idris, from Dolgelly.

During our abode amid those superb mountains, neither sun nor stars appeared to our sight for several days; and, wrapt up in an impenetrable mist, we were perpetually enveloped with a twilight obscurity.

But on our emerging from these romantic visions, the first view of the cheerful rays of the long absent sun gave an inexpressible refreshment

to our spirits—it saluted our immediate approach to the vale of Caernarvon. We changed the climate in an instant—we breathed a freer air.

The situation of Conway is exceedingly fine: it lies on the bank of a noble river, and in the centre of a beautiful vale, well cultivated and woody.

Here we found a considerable alteration in the manners of the people. We were now in the great Irish road; the article of eating was doubled in our bills.

The town of Conway is small, and indifferently built; it was fortified with walls which still remain, and a castle, by Edward the First. (See page 38 and 116 for a further account.)

We crossed the wide ferry at Conway, which brought us into Denbigh-

bighshire, and traversed a hilly country, till we came within eight miles of St. Asaph, when we entered the fertile vale of Clwyd.

We passed over Penmaen-ros in this morning's ride, where the declivity is steep and the road indifferent: a nearer path is cut for horses along the side of the sea cliff, in the same manner as at Penmaen-mawr; but it is so formidably narrow and unprotected, that few people dare trust themselves or their horses on it.

Rhuddlan castle is noted in history for the famous statute enacted in it by Edward the First, in the year 1284, for the better government of his newly-acquired dominion; and the preamble of this statute informs us of the entire subjection of Wales.

Leaving the Irish road at St. Afaph, we soon arrived at the picturesque town of Denbigh, which is built on the declivity of a lofty hill, on the highest point of which are the ruins of a strong castle of the time of Edward the First. The principal gateway is a beautiful Gothic arch, and the king's statue remains in a niche over it, in the same manner as at the castle of Caernarvon.

The original town stood upon this hill, and the walls of it are still visible; but at present the parish church only remains on it, near which is the unfinished shell of a larger church, with a nave and two aisles, which appears to have been begun in the fifteenth century. It is now a ruin.

Ruthin

Ruthin is a large and populous town on the Clwyd, commanding an extensive prospect into that charming vale.

*Further Observations on the Tour
from Chepstow, &c.*

THE most remarkable antiquity of Glamorganshire is Kevn Bryn, a monument of unwrought stone, upwards of twenty tons, supported by six or seven others, set round in a circle to bear up the great one. The carriage and fixing of this stone is, no doubt, the effect of human industry, though it has been called in question.

The most extensive views are the vale of Tawe, seen from the mountains of Rugmore rock, in the road to Brecon, and the bridge

K 4 of

of Tavy, eight miles from Caerphily.

The maiden stone, a rude pillar in the middle of the road near Brecknock, is six feet high, but whether Roman or British cannot be ascertained. On one side are the figures of a man and a woman in ancient habits, particularly curious. From Grongar Hill, eight miles from Caermarthen, is a very extensive view; likewise the road from Llandillo to Neath, over the mountains.

At Caermarthen, in the year 480, flourished the famous *prophet Merlin*. About a mile from the town, nearly opposite to the Bishop of St. David's palace, is a hill covered with wood, called Merlin's Grove, to which he often retired to study: his book of prophecies is still sought after as a curiosity.

Lhan

Lhan Newydd is remarkable for a stone pillar near the highway, and for being the residence of a great ancestor of O. Cromwell, the *Protector*.

Below Talcharn, on the bank of the Tavy, stood a white house, built of hazel rods, where Howell Ddha, or the good Prince of Wales, in an assembly of 140 ecclesiastics, besides laymen, gave a body of laws to his kingdom.

Straflour Abbey, in Cardiganshire, was built by Hore Refus, Prince of South Wales, in the year 1164, but was burnt in the various conflicts of nations, and rebuilt by Henry the First; the public records were kept here from 1156, to 1270.

At Machynleth in Montgomeryshire, *Owen Glyndwr* exercised the first acts of his royalty in 1402: here he accepted the crown of Wales,

and assembled a parliament; the house wherein they met is now standing, divided into separate tenements.

The following are the separate Distances in the foregoing Tour, as near as can be ascertained.

CHEPSTOW to Newport, 19 miles—from thence to Caerphily, 12 miles—ditto to Caerdiff, 20—ditto to Cowbridge, 12—ditto to Pile, 12—ditto to Swansea, 15—ditto to Llandilo Vawr, 22—ditto to Caermarthen, 18—ditto to Narbeth, 22—ditto to Haverfordwest, 10—ditto to St. David's, 16—ditto to Fisgard, 20—ditto to Cardigan, 19—ditto to Aberayron, 28—ditto to Aberystwyth, 18—ditto to Machynlleth,

chynlleth, 18—ditto to Dolgelly, 16—ditto to Tan y Bwlch, 21—ditto to Harlech, 13—ditto to Caernarvon, 21—ditto to Beaumaris, 15—ditto to Conway, 14—ditto to Abergele, 10—ditto to St. Afaph, 8—ditto to Denbigh, 6—ditto to Ruthin, 8—at all of which places there are good accommodations.

*The Distances in the Tour from
Chester to Monmouth.*

CHESTER to Wrexham, 12 miles—from thence to Rhuabon, 5—ditto to Llangollen, 6—ditto to Chirk Castle, 5—ditto to Llanrhaidr, 14—ditto to Welsh Poole, 20—ditto to Montgomery, 8—ditto to Newtown, 9—ditto to Llanbâdarnvy nydd, 11—ditto to Llan-
K 6 drindo,

drindò, 12—ditto to Brecknock, 22—ditto to Abergavenny, 18—ditto to Ragland, 14—and to Monmouth, 8—at which places also are very good inns and accommodations.

TOUR

T O U R

FROM

ROSS TO BALA,

DENBIGH, up the Vale of CLWYD,

TO

CAERNARVON.



T

ROSS to BALA

BRANCH of the CINCINNATI

CARRIAGE

T O U R

FROM

ROSS to BALA, &c.

WE took up our abode at the King's Arms at Ross, formerly the habitation of that celebrated character known by the name of the "Man of Ross," whom Mr. Pope has so highly praised in his poetical works. He was indeed a friend to the human kind. He gave his worldly goods, as far as they would go, to the unfortunate sufferer; and his best wishes and compassion to all. His memory is still

still revered, and his loss lamented in this place.

Written upon a Window-Shutter.

Here dwelt the Man of Rofs. O traveller, here
Departed merit claims the rev'rend tear ;
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he view'd his modest wealth.
If 'neath this roof thy wine-cheer'd moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass,
To higher zest shall mem'ry wake thy soul,
And virtue mingle in th' ennobled bowl.
Here cheat thy cares—in generous visions melt,
And dream of goodness thou hast never felt.

Departing from Rofs we pursued our journey over a very picturesque part of Montgomeryshire, until we arrived at the capital, Montgomery, which is a neat town, and pleasantly situated, partly on the summit of a hill. It owes its foundation to Baldwyn, Lieutenant of the Marches to William the Conqueror ; it is also probable he built the

the castle some time before 1092. (See Powell's Hist.) This castle met the fate of others in the civil wars. On a hill, not far from the castle, is a strong British post, guarded by four ditches. Lord Herbert speaks of it as the habitation of some of his ancestors. From this point is a beautiful view of the vale of Montgomery, which is very extensive, and bounded by the hills of Shropshire. The town was once defended by walls, strengthened by towers, and had also four gates. Camden says Henry the Third granted by charter, that the borough of Montgomery should have the privilege of a free borough, with other liberties. The church is dedicated to St. Nicholas. The house called Blackhall, once the hospitable residence of the family, stood at the bottom; a foss now marks the spot
being

being consumed by fire. The lodge in Limore Park, at a small distance from the town, is still kept up, and shews a venerable wooded front: except St. Asaph, it is one of the smallest capital towns in the king's dominions. We continued our journey to Welsh Poole, in the neighbourhood of which, upon a most beautiful eminence, stands Powis Castle. "It stands upon the side of a very high hill; below lies a vale of incomparable beauty, with the Severn winding through it; the town of Welsh Poole terminated with high mountains. The opposite side is beautifully cultivated half way up, and green to the top, except in one or two hills, whose summits are rocky and of grotesque shapes, that give variety and spirit to the prospect. Above the castle is a long ridge of hills finely shaded, part of which

which is the park; and still higher is a terrace, up to which you are led through very fine lawns, from whence you have a view that exceeds all description. The county of Montgomery, which lies all within this view, was, to our eyes, the most beautiful in South Britain." (See Lord Lyttelton's Tour.)

From Poole to Gilesfield the country is beautifully broken into gentle risings, prettily wooded.

The road from thence to Llanvilling is very intricate, and we contrived to lose our way more than once, notwithstanding we had been told it was very straight.

We were much delighted with the whole of our journey to Llanvilling, a small town which had a charter bestowed on it in the reign of Edward the Second; also with the small

small but pleasant river Verniew, which we crossed.

Llangunnog is singularly situated, surrounded on all sides by barren and sandy hills. The place consists only of a few houses, amongst which there is a small church, where once a week a sermon is delivered in the Welsh language. A lead mine was discovered here in 1692, and continued in a flourishing state during a period of forty years, when the water became too powerful, from having worked it to the depth of 100 yards.

About two miles distance up a small valley, is the shrine of St. Monacella; her hard bed is shewn in the clift of a neighbouring rock; her tomb was in a little chapel or oratory adjoining the church, and now used as a vestry-room.

From





Samuel del.

Underwood Sculp.

A Cottage at Bala Lake.

Published April 21. 1795. by G. Sael N. 109. Strand

From this place we proceeded to Bala, situated upon the borders of a large lake. The country round is grand and sublime, but not interesting; stupendous mountains seem "to mix their heads with dropping clouds;" but with respect to cultivation, or even verdure, they are entirely destitute. It is a small town in the parish of Llanckil, noted for its vast trade in woollen stockings, and its great markets every Saturday morning. Much of the wool is bought at the great fairs at Llanrwst in Denbighshire. Close to the south-east end of the town is a great artificial mount, called Tommen y Bala, in the summer time usually covered in a picturesque manner with knitters of both sexes and all ages. This mount appears to have been Roman, and placed here with a castelet on its summit, to secure the pass towards the

the sea, and keep the mountaineers in subjection. The town is of a very regular form; the principal street very spacious, and the lesser fall into it at right angles. Bala takes its name from its vicinity to the place where a river discharges itself from a lake which lies at a small distance from the town, and is a fine expanse of water, near four miles long, and twelve hundred yards broad in the widest place; the deepest part is opposite Bryn Golen, where it is forty-six yards deep, with three yards of mud; the shores gravelly; the boundaries are easy slopes, well cultivated and varied with wood: in stormy weather its billows run very high. It rises sometimes nine feet, and has overflowed the fair vale of Edeirnion. The waters are discharged under Pont Mwnwgl y Llyn, a bridge of three arches. They seem

seem inconsiderable in respect to the size of the streams which feed the lake; for the Dee does not make in dry seasons the figure we expected. Report says that the Dee passes through the lake from end to end, without deigning to mix its waters, as the Rhone was fabled to serve the lake of Geneva; but, in fact, the Dee does not assume its name till it quits its parent.

It was late in the evening when we left Bala, and therefore, contrary to our intention, we took up our quarters for the night at the Druid house, a solitary place only eight miles distant from that which we had last quitted; and early the following morning we pursued our journey to Rug, and from thence to Corwen, whose church and town form a pretty view from different parts of the road. We next pro-

ceeded to Llangollen. The face of the country now became more interesting. The scene gradually assumed a less rugged appearance; the dark brown mountain, and the desolated heath, softened by distance, formed a beautiful contrast to the wild and irregular scenery that succeeded. We felt our spirits, which had before been depressed from the barren and gloomy country we had traversed, now much exhilarated, and we seemed to breathe a freer air.

Our road was along the banks of the river Dee, which falls murmuring over its pebbled bed at the foot of the mountains, whose steep sides are covered with wood of the largest growth, here and there the shaggy rock, more than half concealed by the surrounding foliage, peering its broken summit beyond the most extended branches, and threat-

threatening, by its fall, to obstruct the course of the river beneath; whilst the spreading beech-tree and mountain-ash are found in great abundance upon its banks, dipping their slender branches in the stream.

Llangollen is most delightfully situated*.

There are two roads from Llangollen to Wrexham, one on each side of the river Dee; the best is that on the right, which we took, but it is rather the longest. The road is carried upon the high grounds, from whence the prospect is delightful. The river, winding through the valleys, sometimes intercepted by a rising ground or thick wood, then opening full upon the view; the luxuriance of nature is richly displayed through the whole landscape.

* See page 66 for a minute description of it.

On the other side, the river, stealing through the valley, had, by its overflowing, contributed to give it the richest appearance of fertility; in some places the mower, almost buried under the high grass, often paused from his labour: in others, the sharp sound of the grinding-stone, the loud laugh, or toil-subduing song, were frequently heard: on the sides of the opposite hills were scattered the modest hamlets that owned these industrious peasants; behind us, at some distance, the whitened spire, and part of the little town we had left, were still visible; whilst over all, the setting sun cast its softened tints, a part of the valley only being shaded by the interposition of a neighbouring mountain, whose summit still retained in glowing colours the last rays of the departing day.

About

About half way from Llangollen to Wrexham, we crossed a bridge where the two roads meet, and then we bad adieu to the river Dee, which kept its course afterwards to the right of us. Wrexham is a large, populous, and well-built town*.

From Wrexham our road became less interesting, and for ten or twelve miles presented nothing to recompense the fatigue of a long and tedious ride, until we had ascended a very high hill, when the vale of Clwyd, in all its beauty, unfolded upon the sight: it appeared like a moving picture, upon which nature had been prodigal of its colours. Hamlets, villages, towns, and castles, rose like enchantment upon this rich carpet, that seemed covered with wood and inclosures; in the

* See page 63 for a description of this place.

midst of it, at the distance of about five miles, the town of Ruthin partially appeared from the bosom of a most beautiful grove of trees; the vale on each side being bounded by a chain of lofty mountains, and far off, on a bold and rugged promontory, stood Denbigh, with its fortrefs, the undisputed mistress of this extended scene. The great defect of the vale is its want of water; the little river Clwyd, which winds through it, not being perceptible at any distance.

Ruthin is pleasantly seated on the easy slope and summit of a rising ground; the castle stood on the south side, and in part sunk beneath the earth: its poor remains impend over the fall of land fronting the west, where a fragment or two of a town are still to be seen, mixed with the native rock which, in parts, served

as a facing to the fortrefs, whose lower part was formed out of it; a very deep foss, hewn out of the solid stone, with a portal at each end, divides it breadthways. The views from the summit of the ruins are very well worthy of the traveller's attention. If he is fond of a more aërial one, we would by all means have him ascend the heights of Bwlch pen y Barras, from whence is a full prospect of the boasted vale, and the remote hills of the Alpine tract. The town of Ruthin was burnt by Owen Glendwr, on September 20, 1400. He took the opportunity of surprising it during the fair, enriched his followers with the plunder, and then retired to his fastnesses among the hills. In the last century, the castle was garrisoned by the loyalists, and sustained, in 1646,

a siege from February to the middle of April, when it surrendered.

The church is large, yet only a chapel to Llanruth; the roof is prettily divided into small squares, ornamented with sculpture, and marked with the names of the workmen. The only monument of any note is that of Dr. Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster in the time of Queen Elizabeth, whose figure is represented by a bust. This illustrious divine was a native of Ruthin, and was greatly distinguished by his various merit. Leland mentions an house of white friars in this town, but gives no particulars. It probably stood in the street to this day called Priors street. The new jail does much honour to the architect, Mr. Joseph Turner; the contrivance comprehending all the requisites of these

these seats of misery, security, cleanliness, and health.

From hence we proceeded to Denbigh. This town is well built, and the principal street, which is on the slope of the hill, is broad and clean, and the accommodations good. Its manufactures in shoes and gloves are very considerable, and great quantities are annually sent to London. After tea we took a walk to view the castle, whose venerable walls, rising high above the town, command a magnificent view.

The prospect through the broken arches is extremely fine, extending in parts over the whole vale, and all its eastern hills, from Moel Venlii to Diserth rock; a rich view, but deficient in water; the river Clwyd being too small to be seen, as before noticed, though in great rains so furious, as to overflow a great space of the meadowy tract.

It was built in the reign of Edward the First, and garrisoned in the time of Charles the First by the royalists, but was obliged to surrender to the parliament army after a gallant and vigorous defence; the breaches in the walls are vast, and serve to shew the strength and thickness of their construction. The royal and unfortunate fugitive, Charles the First, after his retreat from Chester, took up his abode for one night in this castle.

Leland relates a particular of this fortress, which I do not recollect to have seen in any other historian; he says, That Edward IV. was besieged in it; and that he was permitted to retire, on condition that he should quit the kingdom for ever. The only time in which that prince was constrained to abdicate his dominions was in 1470, when he took shipping
at

at Lynn, not by reason of any capitulation with his enemies, but through the desperate situation of his affairs at that period.

Denbigh is more of a venerable than a magnificent ruin, and would of itself have amply repaid us for all the fatigue we had undergone.

Viewing the castle alone, nothing could be more awfully grand than the scene before me, which I surveyed with a degree of admiration not totally destitute of a superstitious fear. The venerable appearance of the whole fabric; walls and battlements rising in ruined majesty; broken arches, half covered by the creeping ivy and enchanters night-shade; high Gothic windows, which but displayed the horrible gloom that reigned within; the mouldering tower, shook by every storm, affording an asylum to the owl and the

bat ; whilst the moon bursting from a dark cloud, threw a partial gleam upon the pile, and served by its feeble light to discover the deep gloom of the remoter parts*.

UPON THE RUINS OF

DENBIGH CASTLE.

PROUD pile ! thy tempest-beaten towers, that rear
Their heads sublime, and to the angry storm
Bid bold defiance, though their aged brows
Bear visible the marks of stern decay ;
While Superstition, with a phrensy'd eye,
And wildering Fear, that horrid forms surveys,
Affright the lonely wanderer from thy walls.

Far hence, thou busy world, nor here intrude
Thy sounds of uproar, arguing much of care
And impotent alarms. Behold, fond man,
This feeble monument of mortal pride,
Where time and desolation reign supreme

* This town has been noticed in p. 198 ; the reason for giving it a place again, was from the description being more enlarged, and probably more accurate ; therefore we trust it will not be less satisfactory to the reader on that account.

With

With wildest havoc—o'er the solemn scene
In silence pause, and mark this pictur'd truth;
That not alone the proudest works of man
Must perish; but as this tow'ring fabric,
That lifts its forehead to the storm, till time
And the wild winds shall sweep it from its base;
Pass but a few short hours—the dream of life
Is fled, and to the cold grave sinks man's faded form.

From Denbigh we went to the hospital house of Gwaenynog, about two miles distant, fronted by the most majestic oaks in the principality. The fine wooded dingles belonging to the demesne are extremely well worth visiting: they are most judiciously cut into walks by the owner, John Middleton, Esq. and afford as beautiful scenery in their kind, as any that may be found.

Mael Varmna superbly terminates one view; and the ruins of Denbigh castle burst awfully at the termination of the concluding path.

Llanerch stands most advantageously in a small but beautiful park, with a fine piece of water at the bottom, and commanding a rich view of the vale, and a long extent of the Clwydian hills, with their fertile sides terminating in heathy summits. The venerable old house, particularly the respectable ancient hall, is frittered into a villa. The former gardens were made by Mutton Davies, Esq., on his return out of Italy in the last century, and were fine in that sort of style, decorated with water-works and statues, emitting water from various parts to the astonishment of the rustic spectators.

Not far from Henllan church, in the parish of Llanfydd, on the bank of the brook Meircheon, are the remains of a seat of Merddydd ap Meircheon, Lord of Isdulas. Part
is

is now standing, particularly the chapel, which serves for a farm-house ; but some very extensive foundations shew its former importance.

From hence, after a ride of a few miles, we reached the vale of the river Aled, a very narrow tract bounded by high hills. The old house of Dyffreyn Aled stood in the bottom ; it had been for many generations the seat of the Wynnes, descended from Marchud.

At the head of the valley stand the village and church of Llanfunnan, dedicated to St. Sannan, confessor and hermit, the friend of St. Winefrede. Their remains were both interred at Guytherin.

In our way we descended a very wooded dell, in the township of Penured, to visit the gloomy cataract of Llyn yr ogo, where the Aled tumbles

bles into an horrible black cavern, shaded by oaks.

Somewhat higher up is another, exposed to full day, falling from a vast height, and dividing the naked glen. Llyn Aled, the small lake from which the river flows, lies at a short distance, amidst black and heathy mountains, through which runs much of the road to Gwytherin.

That little village and church stand on a bank at the head of a small vale near the rise of the Elwy: the church is celebrated for the honour of having first received the remains of St. Winefrede.

We followed the course of the Elwy by Havodynös, the seat of Howell Lloyd, Esq. by the church and village of Llanguniui; by Garthewin, the seat of Robert Wynne, Esq. commanding a most lovely
view

view of a fertile little valley, bounded by hills, and covered with hanging woods ; and by Llanvair, Dôl-hacarn, a village and church at a small distance above the conflux of the Elwy and Aled. Returning to Gwaenynog, we passed beneath Denbigh castle, and visited Llanrhaider, a village in the middle of the vale, remarkable for an east window of good and very entire painted glass, expressing a favourite subject of the time, the root of Jesse. The patriarch is represented sprawling at the bottom with a genealogical tree issuing out of him, containing all the kings of Israel and Juda up to our Saviour. The branches around the kings are in very beautiful foliage ; at the top is a rose of Lancaster, and another with an eye in glory within it, the window being done in 1533,

after the accession of that house. Opposite to the church is the house of Llanrhaider, partly ancient, partly rebuilt by Richard Parry, Esq. the late owner. On an eminence to the north-west of the church, called Gwladus' Chair, is an extremely beautiful view of the vale between Denbigh and Ruthin, and the whole breadth chequered with wood, meadows, and corn-fields, and almost the whole range of the eastern limits soaring far above it. Denbigh castle from hence shews itself to great advantage, with its walls and towers extending along its precipitous base.

At the foot of this rising is Fynnon St. Dyfnog, a fine spring, formerly much resorted to by votaries. The fountain is inclosed in an angular wall, decorated with small human

human figures, and before it is the well for the use of the pious bathers.

Near the road to Ruthin is Bachymbyd, a seat and estate belonging to Lord Bagot.

Near the side of the road are to be seen some very fine chefnut trees, one of which is near twenty-four feet in circumference. The reader need not be told that this species of trees is not a native of Great Britain, nor even of Europe. We are indebted for it to the Romans, who probably first planted it in Kent.

We now passed through Ruthin, and saw the neat mother church of Llanruth. There is in this church a monumental bust of Ambrose, admirably cut: his hair short, beard peaked, and ruff flat.

Two miles east of Ruthin is the seat of Edward Thelwall, Esq. of Llanbeder, a most beautiful situation high on the side of the hills. From Llanruth the vale grows very narrow, and almost closes with the parish of Llanvair. If we place the extremity at Pont Newydd, there cannot be a more beautiful finishing; where the bridge near the junction of the Clwyd and the Hefpen, and a lofty hill with its back clothed with hanging woods, terminate the view.

We next ascended the vale of Nant-clwyd, and for some time rode over dreary commons. On one is a small encampment with a single foss called *Caer-Senial*. Near this place we entered Merionethshire within sight of *Caer Drewyn*, another post, in full view of the beautiful vales of *Glyn-dwrddwy*, watered by the *Dee*.

It

It lies on the steep slope of an hill, is of a circular form, and about half a mile in circumference, and mostly in ruins.

This post or fastness of Caer Drewyn is but one of the chain that begins at Diferth, and is continued along the Clwydian hills into the mountains of Yale. Descending we found the usual ford of the Dee to Corwen impassable, got again into the Ruthin road, and passed near the house of Rûg.

The mount on which the castelet stood is still to be seen in the garden.

We crossed the Dee on a very handsome bridge of six arches, from which the river shews itself to great advantage above and below, in form of two extensive channels bordered by trees, and fertilizing a verdant tract of meadows, and soon reached Corwen.

Lord

Lord Lyttelton says, Corwen is celebrated for being the great rendezvous of the Welsh forces under Owen Gwynedd, who from hence put a stop to the invasion of Henry the Second, in the year 1165. The place of encampment is marked, as we were told, by a rampart of earth, above the church southward, and by the marks of the sites of abundance of tents from thence to the village of Cynwyd. On the south side of the church wall is cut a very rude cross, which is shewn to strangers as the sword of Owen Glendwr.

Leaving Corwen, we returned as far as the bridge on the way we came. The vast Berwyn mountains are the eastern boundary of this beautiful vale. Their highest tops are Cader Fronwen. On the first is a great heap of stones brought from some distant part, with great toil, up their steep

steep ascent, and in their middle is an erect pillar: of him, whose ambition climbed this height for a monument, we are left in ignorance. Under their summit is said to run an artificial road called Helen's Way.

Cynwyd is a small village, formerly noted for the courts kept here; but they have been long discontinued, and the records destroyed.

Rhaider Cynwyd finely finishes the end of the view, and extends about half a mile from the village. The water of the river bursts from the sides of the hill through deep and narrow chasms, from rock to rock, which are overgrown with wood. The rude and ancient stocks that hang in many parts over the precipices, add much to this picturesque scene, which is still improved by the little mill and its inhabitants in this sequestered bottom.

We

We proceeded to Bala, and passed the little church of Llangar, and soon arrived at Llandrillo, a village with a church, seated on the torrent Keidio, at the mouth of a great glen, which extends upwards of two miles, embosomed in the Berwyn mountains, and leads to the noted pass through them, called Milldir Gerrig, into the county of Montgomery.

At about a mile distant from Llandrillo, we crossed the Dee at Pont Gilan, a bridge of two arches, over a deep and black water. Beyond this spot the valley acquires new beauties, especially on the right. The road runs at the foot of the brow of a stupendous height, covered with venerable oaks, which have kept their stubborn station amidst the rudest of rocks. Upon the right stand the church and village of Llandderfel, and opposite to this a bridge
of

of four arches. At some distance from it the vale almost closes; and at Kalettur finishes nobly with a lofty wooded eminence, above which soar the vast mafs of the Aren mountains, notwithstanding they appear immediately after to be very remote.

On the left is Rhiewadog, noted for a battle between Llowarch Hên and the Saxons, in which he lost the last of his numerous sons. The estate of Rhiwaedog is owned by Mr. Dolbin.

Passing by the village and church of Llanvawr, we crossed the torrent Troweryn, beneath Rhiwlas, the ancient seat of the Prices.

We returned to Bala, and continued our journey on the south side of the lake, a most beautiful ride, and passed by Llanychil church.

We left on the right an ancient seat, Caer Gai, placed on an eminence.

nence. Camden says, it was a castle built by one Caius, a Roman; the Britons ascribe it to Gai, foster-brother to King Arthur. Returning towards Caer Gai, we saw the village and church of Llan-uwchllyn.

Close by this village run the Avon and Lliw. The last rises from two springs, and falls into the former. Those who chuse to derive the Dee from its double origin may fix on these: but we meet with a third at the farthest corner of the lake, arising from the neighbourhood of the lofty Arun.

Arriving at the foot of Bwlch y Groes, or the Pass of the Cross, one of the most terrible in North Wales, the height is gained by going an exceedingly steep and narrow zig-zag path: the pass itself is a dreary, heathy flat, on which it is supposed the cross stood to excite the thanksgiving

giving of travellers for having so well accomplished their arduous journey. The descent on the other side is much greater, and very tedious, into the long and narrow vale of Mowddwy. It is seven or eight miles long, and so contracted as scarcely to admit a meadow at the bottom. Its boundaries are vast hills, generally very verdant, and fine sheep-walks.

In one place to the right the mountains open, and furnish a gap to give sight to another picturesque and strange view, the rugged and wild summit of Aran Mowddwy, which soars above with tremendous majesty.

There is a beauty in this vale, which is not frequent in others of those mountainous countries. The inclosures are all divided by excellent quickset hedges, and run far up

M

the

the sides of the hills, in places so steep as that the common traveller would scarcely find footing. Numbers of little groves are interspersed, and the hills above them shew a fine turf to the top, where the bog and heath commence, which give shelter to multitudes of red grouse, and a few black.

A new road is now making at this place.

After riding some time along the bottom of the vale, we passed by the village and church of Llan y Mowddwy; and about five miles further we reached Denis y Mowddwy, seated on a plain at the junction of three vales. (See page 15.)

We took a delightful walk of about two miles along the vale on the banks of the Dyfi. The valley expands, and the hills sink in height towards the west.

After

After passing the Dyfi we crossed a bridge over the deep and still water of the Klywêdog, black as ink, passing sluggishly through a darksome chasm into open day.

We reached Mallwyd, remarkable for the situation of the altar in the middle of the church.

One of the beautiful yew trees in the church-yard is extremely well worth notice ; it is a sort of forest of vast trees, issuing out of one stem, forming a most extensive shade, and magnificent appearance.

Leaving here, we took the road towards Dolgelly ; we passed by some deserted lead-mines.

About three miles from Dinas we left on the left hand the vast sheep-farm of Pennant-higi ; a deep bottom environed on three sides by vast mountains, forming a noble theatre.

We ascended a steep hill into the pass Bwlch Oer-ddrews, and the country beyond suddenly assumes a new face.

Before us was a vast extent of dreary slope bounded by great rocky mountains, among which Cader Idris soars pre-eminently.

We descended from hence, along very bad stony roads to Dolgelly, every entrance to which is barred by a turnpike, in imitation of other places, and every approach mended for a short space by help of the scanty tolls. The town is small, the streets disposed in a most irregular manner; but the situation is in a beautiful vale, fertile, well wooded, and embellished with numbers of pretty seats, and watered by the river Wnion; over which, on account of its floods, is a bridge of several arches.

Cader

Cader Idris rises immediately above the town, and is generally the object of the traveller's attention.

On the other side, at nearer distance, we saw Craig Cay, a great rock* with a lake beneath, lodged in a deep hollow; possibly the crater of an ancient volcano. This is excellently expressed by the admirable pencil of Mr. Wilson.

In descending from the Cader, we kept on the edge of the greater precipice till we came near the Cyfrwy, another peak. The whole space, for a considerable way, was covered with loose stones, in the form of a stream, sloping from the precipitous side.

We continued our ride beneath Tyrrau Maur, one of the points of Cader Idris, the highest rock I ever rode under. We descended a steep

* See page 18.

pass through fields, and, crossing the river, dined on a great stone beneath the vast rock Craig y Deryn, so called from the number of cormorants, rock pigeons, and hawks, which breed on it.

Here the Towyn is contracted into a fertile vale, which extends about two miles further; near its end is a long and high rock, narrow on the top. Here stood the castle of Tiberri, which was cut out of the rock on two sides.

We continued our ride several miles along the pretty vale of Tal y Llyn; very narrow, but consisting of fine meadows bounded by lofty, verdant mountains, very steeply sloped.

We went by Llyn y Myngil, a beautiful lake, about a mile long, which so far fills the valley as to leave only a narrow road on one side.

sider. Its termination is very picturesque.

A few miles beyond Tal y Llyn church the hills almost meet at their bottoms, and change their aspect. No verdure was now to be seen; but a general appearance of rude and savage nature.

We passed near the Three Grains, which are three vast rocks, the ruins of the neighbouring mountain, which some time or other had fallen into the water.

After descending Bwlch Coch, we again reached Dolgelly, crossing the bridge of Llan Ellytd. Below is a fine tract of meadow, wretchedly deformed by the necessity of digging into it for turf, the fuel of the country. On the left is the church of Llan Ellytd; on the right, in a rich flat, stand the remains of the abbey of St. Cymmer. Part of the church

is still to be seen, and shews its ancient grandeur. The great hall, and part of the abbot's lodgings, now form a farm-house.

We continued our journey on a bank high above the Maw. The valley grows soon very contracted; the sides of the hills finely covered with wood almost to the top; the river assumes the form of a torrent, rolling over a rocky channel.

At Dôl y Melynlllyn we turned out of the road, meeting the furious course of the Gamlan, that falls with short interruptions from rock to rock, for a very considerable space, amidst the woods and bushes, till it reaches a lofty precipice, whence it precipitates into a black pool, which gives to the cataract the name of The Black.

Not far from thence, the junction of the Maw and Eden forms another
fine

fine scene. A lofty hill clothed with woods ends here, and forms the forks of the rivers correspondent to the steepes through which these torrents roll, and exhibits a view like those of the shady wilds of America.

In various parts Cader Idris appears in full majesty over these sloping forests, and gives a magnificent finishing to the prospect. Soon after our arrival among the woods, another cascade astonished us with its grandeur. After the water reaches the bottom of the deep concavity, it rushes into a narrow, rocky chasm of a very great depth, over which is an admirable wooden Alpine bridge; and the whole, for a considerable way, awfully canopied by trees.

“ From hence we took the track towards Festiniog, a village in Merionethshire, the vale before which

is the most perfectly beautiful of all we had seen. From the height of this village you have a view of the sea. The hills are green and well shaded with wood. There is a lovely rivulet which winds through the bottom; on each side are meadows, and above are corn-fields along the sides of the hills; at each end are high mountains which seemed placed there to guard this charming retreat against any invasions. With the woman one loves, with the friend of one's heart, and a good study of books, one might pass an age there, and think it a day. When we had skirted this *happy vale* an hour or two, we came to a narrow branch of the sea, which is dry at low water. As we passed over the sands, we were surprised to see all the cattle prefer that barren place to the meadows. The guide said it was to avoid a fly which

which in the heat of the day came out of the woods, and infested them in the vallies.

“ The view of the said sands is terrible, as they are hemmed in on each side with very high hills, but broken into a thousand irregular shapes. At one end is the ocean, at the other the formidable mountains of Snowdon, black and naked rocks, which seemed to be piled one above the other; the summits of some of them are covered with clouds, and cannot be ascended. The grandeur of the ocean, corresponding with that of the mountain, formed a majestic and solemn scene; ideas of immensity swelled and exalted our minds at the sight: all lesser objects appeared mean and trifling, so that we could hardly do justice to the ruins of an old castle, situated upon the top of a conical hill, the foot of

which is washed by the sea, and which has every feature that can give a romantic appearance. The morning being fair, we ventured to climb up to the top of a mountain, not, indeed, so high as Snowdon, which is here called Moel Guidon, i. e. the nest of the eagle; but one degree lower than that called Moel Haprock, the nest of the hawk, from whence we saw a phenomenon new to our eyes, but common in Wales; on the one side was midnight, on the other bright day: the whole extent of the mountain of Snowdon on our left, was wrapt in clouds from top to bottom: on the right the sun shone most gloriously over the sea coast of Caernarvon. The hill we stood upon was perfectly clear, the way we came up a pretty easy ascent; but before us was a precipice of many hundred yards,
and

and below a vale, which, though not cultivated, has much savage beauty; the sides were steep, and fringed with low wood. There were two little lakes, or rather large pools, that stood in the bottom, from which issued a rivulet that serpentine in view for two or three miles, and was a pleasing relief to the eyes; but the mountains of Snowdon, covered with darkness and thick clouds, called to my memory the fall of Mount Sinai, with the laws delivered from it, and filled my mind with religious awe." For this animating picture of Festiniog, &c. see Lord Lyttelton's *Tour*.

We kept on the side of the hill above the valley which leads to Barmouth, seated near the bottom of some high mountains, and the houses placed on the steep sides, one above another, in such a manner as

to

to give the upper an opportunity of seeing down the chimnies of their next subjacent neighbours. The town is seated very near to the sea, at the mouth of the Maw.

From hence we took the road to Harlech, a small town, remarkable only for its castle, which is seated on a lofty rock, facing the Irish sea, above an extensive marsh once occupied by the water. "Margaret of Anjou, the faithful and spirited queen of the meek Henry VI., found in this castle, in 1460, an asylum after the unfortunate battle of Northampton." (See Crates' History.)

From Harlech we passed by the village of Llan Tegwyn, and near a small lake, filled with that beautiful aquatic, the water lily.

Somewhat farther is a lake which well merits the name of fair and lovely, about a mile round, whose
waters

waters are of a cryſtalline clearneſs.

After a ſhort ride we reached the village and chapel of Maen Twrog, adjoining Tan y Bwlch. Here is a very ſmall neat inn for the reception of travellers, who ought to think themſelves much indebted to a nobleman, for the great improvement it received from his munificence. Above it is a houſe embosomed with woods, moſt charmingly ſituated on the ſide of the hill.

The river hereabouts widens into a good ſalmon fiſhery, and after ſome ſpace falls into an arm of the ſea.

About a mile from Cynfael is a comfortable inn, which received us after our toiliſome expedition. After reſreſhment we deſcended the long and tedious ſteep of Bwlch Carreg y Fran, into the narrow vale of Penmachno,

machno, and after ascending another hill, turned to the right into the black and moory mountains to visit Lly Conwy, the source of the noted river of that name: it is a very large piece of water, most dismally situated among rock and bog, and the sides very irregularly indented.

We proceeded two or three miles, and reached the village Ysphyty, the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, so styled from its having formed, in the then inhospitable country, an asylum and guard for travellers, under the protection of the knights, who held the manor.

Proceeding, we soon reached the river Conway, and entered into Caernarvonshire.

T O U R

OF

CAERNARVONSHIRE

AND

ANGLESEA.



· T O U R ·
OF
CAERNARVONSHIRE
AND
ANGLESEA.

CAERNARVONSHIRE is estimated to be sixty miles long ; but the breadth in the broadest part does not probably exceed twenty. The inhabitants have been calculated to be twenty thousand.

This county claims precedency to every other in Wales, for the loftiness of its mountains, and the multitude of its eminences. They occupy almost

almost the whole extent, in a curved, ferrated chain, from the promontory of Ormshead easterly to Bardsey Isle. Whilst its fertile vales on the one hand invite you to repose, its huge and savage rocks on the other, generally come home to the feelings of the traveller in an abundant degree. Not a space is there that is not diversified with bare and stupendous elevations, with wide gaping chasms of savage aspect, with pleasing incurvations of some fertility, with rich bottoms, and some abrupt and some gentle slopes and swells. Its antiquity is rather obscure; and the historical accounts of the county, prior to the commencement of the eighth century, furnish no satisfactory register of events. The improved parts of the county now occupy nearly the half of the superficies; and perhaps in ages to come almost the whole
fur-

surface, wherever any mould is left, may be brought to a state of artificial pasturage. It was with pleasure we learned that cultivation had of late years been much encouraged in this county. In many places the mountains shew the marks of useful exertion and laudable industry, being considerably cultivated at their bottoms, and ascending gradually upwards, as far as the soil would admit to repay the labour.

The mountains in the space from Conway to Caernarvon seem embosomed in one another, and assume various features; but from the Anglesea shore they put on a more regular appearance, range rising upon range in three gradations, then lost in the distant azure. The lower vallies and sides to the first swell are in general fertile, temperate, and habitable. The second range affords
pasturage

pasturage and fuel for the poor, such as peat, &c. The highest ridge comprises in it the nature of the frigid zone; the air is keen and rarefied, and snow sometimes prevails there more than half the year. When it rains mildly in the lower districts of the mountain, it oftentimes snows with severity on the heights.

At Llanrwst, the traveller by way of Shrewsbury first enters this delicious vale: the side down the hill, upon the opening of it, is striking beyond imagination; the Caernarvonshire side, rising suddenly to a great height, impresses the mind not accustomed to abrupt scenes of nature with astonishment and delight. This small town is situated near the southern extremity of the vale on the banks of the river Conway, which divides this county from that of Denbigh.

high. The place is celebrated for its bridge, which consists of three arches, the middle of which is elliptical, and is the admiration of strangers, and worthy of the great architect Inigo Jones. The town has nothing to boast of in its buildings; the church is a pleasing object, dedicated to St. Rystyd, A. D. 361, in which are some monuments worth the attention of the curious, particularly that of Llewelyn the Great. The vale, which is of no great extent, widens in succession to its termination at Conway; and a noble river, capable of receiving small craft, runs the whole length of it.

Near Llanbeder, from the road, is seen a roaring cataract; the fall is not altogether perpendicular, but the inclination is nearly so; and the whole body of water, which in floods is

is considerable, appears all foam, from its agitation with opposing rocks. On the left is Caerhun, so called from Rhyn ap Maelgwyn Gwyneth, who lived here about the sixth century. Here we tried to find Helen's noted road, but our search was fruitless. We saw a British post of much strength, and singularly guarded. From this hill one way is a wild and barren prospect of rude mountains and stony bottoms; and on the other, the whole extent of the pretty fertile Nant Conway.

At this part of the river, called Tal y Cafn, is a flat ferry conveyance from one shore to the other.

The town of Conway, before noticed, is pleasantly situated on a gentle ascent over the estuary of that name. It is so called from the British words Kyn and Wy, which signify

nify the head or chief river. For a further account of this place, see Tour from Holyhead.

Though *Snowdon* has been before mentioned, in page 30, the following account is so extremely interesting, that I flatter myself it will be acceptable to the reader :

This is the most noted eminence in the whole region of the Welsh hills, and may with propriety be styled the British Alps. The top, by way of pre-eminence, is termed *y Wyddfa*, that is, the *conspicuous* ; for from this height the visible horizon cannot be less than a thousand miles. The summit is a plain of about six yards in circumference ; and from hence may be seen a part of Ireland, of Scotland, and of England, Cumberland, Lancashire, Cheshire, and all North Wales, the Irish and British seas, and lakes innumerable. Such

N

a boun-

a bountiful display of nature at once astonishes and charms the beholder. Tancred Robinson makes the height 1200 yards; but Mr. Pennant, perhaps nearer the truth, sets it at 1189 yards. But what is this altitude to that of Mont Blanc, or Cotopaxi? The former measures two thousand four hundred and twenty-six toises, and the latter three miles perpendicular height. To ascend Snowdon is no easy exercise; it requires some resolution and activity to clamber rocks, and skip over bogs: yet persons on horseback have been known to reach the summit with a degree of safety. All pleasures are attended with fatigue. Once, in ascending this king of hills, I found myself uncommonly weary at the end of the journey: having put on boots for warmth, they not only retarded expedition, but rendered the footing less

less firm and secure. The night is usually chosen to begin the ascension, in order to be at the apex at sunrise, which is a prospect uncommonly magnificent, if the morning be clear. I left Caernarvon at five P. M. and arrived leisurely at the base of the mountain a little before eight, in the month of August. The azure now promised no fair weather, it being hazy, and the wind high. However, from this hopeful circumstance I learned some operations of nature, which I should have missed, had the sky appeared without a cloud. Quellyn lake exhibited a surface boisterous to a degree that I had never observed before in fresh water: like a tempestuous sea, the billows foamed and roared. The wind rushing along the interstices of the mountains, and being pent from expanding, exerted itself

in an incredible degree of fury. Here one had no occasion

———“to invoke the winds
“To break the toils where strangled vapours lie.”

Storms frequently prevail in the defiles of the mountains ; the wind, rushing between them through a narrow channel, at once increases in speed and density. I rested the beginning of the night at a small farmhouse among the rocks : to begin to ascend it was too soon. At twelve P. M. I eagerly proceeded with a guide, and arrived at the top, without any material occurrence of observation, about three in the morning. The dawn of day now appeared, and there was something very awful and impressing in the situation. Nature looked tremendous and frowning, and the atmosphere was every moment putting on a different aspect ; at one instant the sky was clear, the
next

next overcast with clouds: now a misty rain, then fair weather. The transition was uncommonly quick and perceptible, until the sun became visible in the horizon. Never shall I forget the horror and the pleasure I then felt. He appeared to come forth from the ocean in fiery redness, and like a giant to run his course. A pure azure for a few minutes now displayed itself with refulgent beauty. The clouds were forming fast underneath, and the wind being brisk, soon carried them over head: and with such rapidity were they impelled from the great chasm of Llanberris, that they seemed to rise like smoke out of a great furnace. Now and then the beams or rays of the sun darted from between the clouds like lightning, flashing upon the adverse rocks. The multitude of lakes in these mountains, and the hu-

midity of the soil, bring on these phenomena. When the sun had ascended some degrees, the sky brightened; but the exhaled vapours appeared visible, and sometimes are so through the course of the day. Goats are not unfrequent on some of the most inaccessible cliffs, and sheep on all easy acclivities. Though you are here within an hour's ride of an hospitable and social people, yet the ideas of waste and solitude unavoidably prevail. The elevation of your footing is so unusual to the mind, that while you survey the amazing prospect with astonishment and admiration, you tremble at the contemplation of the slippery situation you are in. Anglesea displays or unfolds itself to you like a map, and you can plainly discern its windings, crooks, and bays. Man's power is diminished, and even debased

based in his own eyes, at the grandeur and greatness of the scenes before him.

About six miles from Caernarvon is Llanberris. The upper and lower lakes are separated by a meadow; and on a craig are seated the ruins of Polbadern Castle, at the foot of which flows the river; that rising in the upper end of Llanberris vale, passes through the lakes, and falls into the Menai at Caernarvon.

Llanberris is a very picturesque vale, bounded by the base of Snowdon. The venerable oaks spoken of by Leland are now no more.

One of the curiosities of Caernarvonshire is Pont Aberglaslyn, a bridge which joins this county to Merionethshire. It is remarkable for a salmon-leap close by it, and famous for its site, being an arch thrown from one hill to another.

The country hereabouts is uncommonly romantic and wild, rising on either side into abrupt precipices ; and the noise of the river, in the wintry deluge, is uncommonly loud, though the stream in its usual progress is never very silent and placid, from the number of dark loose blocks of stone in every direction of the river, hurled into it from the circumjacent hills. The road from Caernarvon to the bridge, the distance about twelve miles, is hard, spacious, and sufficiently level for wheel-carriages ; in consequence of which, and the picturesque scenes all along the ride, the place is much resorted to in the summer season.

The church of Beddgelert, a small neat structure, is situated close to the river, and surrounded by towering mountains. Behind the public house, opposite a mill, is a grand sublime
view

view of the variegated face of nature. To the east is a solemn hollow, rugged with rocks, and savage with huge excrescences. The eye, in the survey of this horrid chasm, is relieved now and then by spots of verdure, by patches of heath, by thinly scattered sheep, and by the beautiful curvature of the mountain. This is an excellent stand to take a landscape of naked nature; having received no embellishment from the industry of man, it exhibits a surface desolate and deserted. It is probable this part of the country was covered with trees, which were a covert for wolves, and other beasts of the forest; as in the Welsh annals this region is styled the forest of Snowdon.

The mountains of Caernarvonshire run in a bent line from sea to sea. The east point is a headland, called

N 5 Ormhead,

Ormshead, the west Aberdaron. The defiles and openings that give these mountains a passage, have all been strongly fortified, either with castles, towers, or forts. Deganwy castle stands at the opening at Conway; Caerhun at the pass of Bwlch y Ddau Vaen, with a fort below it at Aber; Dol y Felin castle and a watch-tower at Nant Frankon; Dolbadern at Nant Peris: at Criccieth is a strong castle; and at Castell Gyfarch a watch-tower; and a fort at Dolbenmaen.

There are two grand ridges of mountains in North Wales, running due north and south—the Snowdon chain, and that of Cader Idris, the highest and interior peaks of which consist of primitive rocks of granite, porphyry, serpentine, and hornblend: then come the secondary, as slates; these are terminated by the
deri-

derivative mountain of lime and sandstone.

There is not the least appearance of the effects of volcanic fire in all Wales, nor the smallest specimens of lava, cellular or compact pumice, to be found. All the Welsh mountains evince a Neptunian origin. Some decomposed stones about Cader Idris have been mistaken for volcanic products.

All mountains are abundant in springs and rivers; and the reason is obvious. Their power of attraction, and degree of cold, is considerable, and in proportion to their height; they intercept the flying vapours and clouds, which are condensed; water rushes down their sides, and forms lakes of great depth; and from these conservatories rivers are formed; or else insinuating itself between the strata, forms springs.

South-west of Caernarvon are those very observable hills called Rivles. They are all conical, and of great height: they extend in a beautiful towering order, almost to the western extremity of the county.

The air of the upper mountains is keen, and oftentimes piercing: the vallies are more temperate; and about the skirts of the hills, and near the influence of the sea air, it is milder still. Snow seldom continues long in the lower regions; in the higher regions it usually maintains a contest with the sun for more than six months in the year.

The weather in North Wales is very changeable, and subject to heavy rains, as all mountainous countries on the side of the tropics, are: yet the variation of the thermometer is never great; 30 usually is the lowest, and 75 the highest, a difference

difference of 45 only : the medium is 44.

Dinas Dinlle, about four miles south-west of Caernarvon, is an artificial mount of gravel and earth, close to the sea shore. This is conjectured to have been a British camp or fortification ; but Mr. Pennant judges it to have been a Roman fortress ; and, to corroborate this supposition, a coin of Alectus was found here.

Clynog.—This place is famous for having been a college, which was founded by Beuno, son of Bavagius. King Cadwallader and Prince Anarawd were considerable benefactors to the church, which is Gothic, and the most handsome in the county : the architecture, though upon a smaller scale than that of Bangor, seems superior to the cathedral in style of building.

As

As this village is about midway between the towns of Caernarvon and Pwllheli, it has one tolerably good inn. The country from hence to Pwllheli is, in general, dreary and barren, but with here and there a gentleman's house, around which the ground for a little way puts on a more cultivated appearance; yet, on the whole, sterility seems visible. The pass to the entrance of Llyn is called Drws Daufyndd, a narrow avenue defended by two lofty mountains. A. D. 945, Aliboc wasted this country; and again, soon after, Constantine with the Danes ravaged it; and at a place called Gwaith Hirberth the Danes were overthrown, and Constantine was slain.

The town of Pwllheli is the best in this county, situated close to the sea, and consists of one main street and some lanes: it is a place of considerable

siderable trade in corn, butter, cheese, &c. and has the cheapest market of any seaport town in North Wales. It has a tolerable harbour for vessels of about sixty tons.

This place was made a free borough by the Black Prince, by charter, dated the 12th year of his principality at Caernarvon.

At the distance of five miles from hence is Carn Madryn, a lofty rocky hill, noted for being a strong hold of O. Gwyned, to whom this part of the country belonged. From the summit is an extensive view of Caernarvon and the country round.

At Penmorfa several antiquities are scattered about this part of the country. Near Dolbenmaen is a large mount, on which, it is conjectured, there has been a watch-tower. Near Ystemgegid are three cromlechs; and in the neighbourhood

hood of Clennenny is a druidical circle, consisting of thirty-eight stones.

Nafyn is a small market town on the sea coast. Here King Edward the First, in 1284, held his triumph on the *conquest of Wales*. The concourse of visitors was prodigious; not only the chief nobility of England, but numbers from foreign courts, graced the festival.

Dugdale says, besides this festival held at Nafyn, another was presented by the Earl of Mortimer at Kenilworth, where the knights performed their martial exercise, and the ladies danced in silken mantles.

At a small distance from hence is Vortigern's valley, an immense hollow, where, it is said, he fled from the rage of his subjects, and that both he and his castle were consumed by lightning. Fancy cannot frame
a place

a place of deeper *solitude* for him who may wish to retreat from the world and society. To have shewed it *Zimmerman*, might have dilated his heart, if it had afforded no new idea to his mind, on a subject he has so happily discussed *. The herring fishery is carried on here to considerable advantage.

We passed by Slymlyn, the seat of — Wynne, Esq. and arrived at Crickieth, a small borough town, contributory to Caernarvon: it has a castle, supposed to be founded by Edward the First, which is seated on a round hill jutting far into the sea, and the isthmus is crossed by two deep ditches. On either side of the entrance is a great round tower: its supposed founder is Edward the First, but Mr. Pennant suspects it to be of British architecture.

* See *Zimmerman* on Solitude.

Evioneth is a hundred of the south-west of Caernarvonshire: it is supposed to have obtained this name from its being watered by a number of small rivers.

Bardsey Island is situated at the extremity of Caernarvonshire, celebrated in former times as a religious asylum: it is about two miles in circumference, and contains a few inhabitants. The abbot house is a large stone building, inhabited by several of the natives. The whole island's spiritual concerns are now supplied by one person only—strange fatality! when we read that this once celebrated place afforded an asylum to 20,000 saints, and after death graves for the same. Dr. Fuller, with pleasantry, observes, “it would be more facile to find graves in Bardsey for so many saints,

“saints, than saints for so many
“graves.” The slaughter of the
monks of Bangor, about the year
607, is supposed to have contributed
to the population of this island, num-
bers having fled here to avoid the
fury of the Saxons. Here a beauti-
ful red stone is dug, which will take
a fine polish.

The productions of Caernarvon-
shire are neither very abundant nor
various, yet more than sufficient,
with good husbandry, to supply the
inhabitants. The soil for the most
part is raw and shallow: even the
vallies and bottoms seem to be only
the shattered refuse of the mountains,
consisting chiefly of loose stones,
some earth, and some vegetable re-
mains. Where the land is tho-
roughly manured and meliorated, it
produces good corn.

The

The Welsh music is harmonious, but plaintive, slow, and affecting. The tunes were chiefly composed to celebrate the glory of the heroes of their country, or to bewail their losses, and to stir up a spirit of liberty in the people: although alliteration is a characteristic of the Welsh song, they have very few tunes in allegro.

Of instruments, the harp, the crowd, and pib-corn, are peculiar to the Welsh. The first needs no description; the second is similar to the bass-viol, but with six strings, and played with the bow in the same manner: the pib-corn is a fluted bore, with six stops, and a hollow horn at each end; the mouth-piece is a reed or quill: the tone has some affinity to that of the bagpipe.

Of minstrels there were three sorts formerly in Wales. First, the bards, who

who composed songs and odes of various measures. Second, such as played upon musical instruments. Third, *Ateaniad*, whose business it was to sing to the instrument played upon by another: each of these Grif-ydd ap Conan, about A. D. 1136, reformed and corrected.

ISLE
OF
ANGLESEA.

ANGLESEA, with her sister, the Isle of Man, have been thought to be the Elysian Fields and Fortunate Islands so much talked of by the ancients. The general name, Mona, imports both a solitary place, and furthestmost island. The language first brought over to the island of Albion, probably continued in it for many ages after, and consequently must be the first language used and spoken in the Isle of Anglesea. This was anciently, by Latin writers, called Mona, is an island,

island, and one of the counties of North Wales, according to the present division, separated from the main land by a narrow arm of the sea. It is seated in a temperate air, enlivened by a benign sun, and enriched with a good and bountiful soil. It is now become so great a thoroughfare from Ireland, and has so much business of its own, that the roads are in general very good, and (what is unusual in Wales) the traveller often meets with direction-posts in the divisions of the road. The face of the island is but little interesting to the traveller, though it affords a rich harvest to the mineralogist.

Porth Althwy, the most general ferry into Anglesea, is immediately below the church.

The account given by Tacitus of the expedition of Suetonius against
this

this island is the most striking picture of the character of the Druids, and probably more to be relied upon than any other.

The shore from Porthamel is famed for being the place where he landed, and put an end in this island to the Druid reign.

The Danes frequently invaded Anglesea; and between the years 969 and 972, Godfryd, the son of Harold, subdued the whole island.

Our knowledge of the Druids is still vague and unsatisfying, and must ever remain so, as they committed few things, if any, to writing, though they were certainly not unacquainted with letters; for, among the maxims collected by Gollet, there is one that forbids their mysteries to be written, a prohibition which could never have been given, had letters been entirely unknown:

some

some curious particulars, however, may at least be traced from tradition, and others from specimens of their poetry that have been recited by the natives. As guardians of what they called true religion, they of course possessed the greatest authority among the people; no laws were instituted by the princes without their advice. They taught the immortality, and some say the transmigration, of the soul; a doctrine borrowed from the Pythagoreans, though Clemens Alexandrinus expressly asserts that the Pythagoreans borrowed that doctrine from them.

Once a year they, with their chief, an Arch-Druid, assembled at a fixed time and place to hear causes and determine all disputes; where their decisive court was held has never been determined, but most probably in Anglesea, as that island was cer-

O

tainly

tainly their metropolis. So great was the power of the Druids, that not only the property, but also the lives of the people were entirely at their disposal; and this power continued absolute till the time of Tiberius: it was afterwards suppressed by Claudius, under the fair pretext of abolishing human sacrifices; but the priests themselves, their gods, and their altars subsisted, though in obscurity, till the final destruction of Paganism.

Very few traces of the temples and habitations of the Druids are now to be found; some old stones, shapeless and without order, here and there, indicate that there might have stood on these spots the rude and simple piles where the primæval inhabitants of this island solemnized their religious ceremonies; and this is all that now remains of that once celebrated
order

order of, priesthood, which overspread the northern regions of Europe. Strange fatality! that little more than a few shapeless stones, and the uncertain testimony of oral tradition, remain to satisfy us of the influence that extraordinary religion once possessed over the human mind.

At Tre'r Dryw, or the habitation of the *Arch-Druid*, we met with the mutilated remains described by Mr. Rowland in his History of Anglesea. His Brein Gwyn, or royal tribunal, is a circular hollow of 180 feet in diameter, surrounded by an immense agger of earth and stones, evidently brought from some other place: it has only a single entrance. This is supposed to be the grand consistory of the Druidical administration.

Here are also the reliques of a circle of stones, with the cromlich in

the midst, but all extremely imperfect.

Their ceremonies, according to Tacitus, were performed “ in groves, “ sacred to the most cruel supersti- “ tions; for they offered up their sa- “ crifices upon altars stained with “ the blood of their captives; and it “ was usual for them to augur ac- “ cording as the blood of the human “ victim followed the sacred knife “ that had inflicted the wound.”

Though Anglesea is called the granary of Wales, it appeared to us as unworthy the appellation; for twenty miles of our road through it, we could not discover more than five or six corn fields, and the grass lands so miserably poor, that it starved rather than fed its hungry inhabitants. We undoubtedly did not see the country to the best advantage, because the excessive heat of the summer

mer had parched up the ground, and occasioned a general appearance of dearth.

Newborough, about three miles from the shore, is a place greatly fallen away from its ancient splendour. Here had been one of the residences of the princes. This was also the seat of justice for the whole county of Menai. Edward I. erected the town into a corporation, which was confirmed by Edward III. From this time it was called Newborough.

Amlwch is a considerable town and small sea-port on the coast. Thirty years ago there were not six houses in the parish, though it is now supposed to contain near 4000 inhabitants. They are also erecting a church here. The copper (that is found in the Paris and Mona mines, which are not more than two miles from the town) is shipped to London,

don, Liverpool, &c. The Mona mine produces the finest ore; they also precipitate large quantities of copper by means of old iron, from the water which runs through the ore, and which is collected in pits. (For a particular account of the whole process, see the Scotch Encyclopedia, and Pennant's History of Wales.) There is no difficulty in distinguishing this celebrated mountain, being perfectly barren from the summit to the plain below; not a shrub, and scarce a blade of grass, being able to live in this sulphurous atmosphere.

At Llanidan is the seat of Lord Boston, finely situated on that arm of the sea, commanding, upwards, a beautiful prospect of Caernarvon and Snowdon hills. The church adjacent was built in 1535.

Plas

Plas Newydd, the seat of Lord Uxbridge, lies close upon the water, protected on three sides by venerable oaks and ashes. The view up and down this magnificent river-like strait, is extremely fine.

A little below Plas Newydd, on the Caernarvonshire side, appear the extensive woods of Vaenol, with the old house of the same name.

At Craig y Ddinas we were irresistibly delayed by feasting our eyes with the fine view of the noble curvature of the *Menai*. The parts adjacent to the *Menai* are finely wooded, but the trees commonly shrink from the south-west, and many of them are entirely blighted from that quarter. The interior of the island is rather naked, but breeds many cattle and sheep.

The Caernarvonshire mountains we had lately quitted extend all across

the county, from Penmaen-mawr to Traeth-mawr, in one continued chain, whose outline is varied at irregular intervals by conical peaks, towering above the rest; these gradually rise to the summit of Snowdon, and again as gradually decline, till they terminate all together in the northern horn of Cardigan Bay. The Menai at high water is about one mile broad.

We dined at Gwyndu, on the great road to Holyhead, which is called by the natives Caer Guby, on account of St. Kybi, a holy man, who lived there A. D. 308. We left it on the right, and steered our course nearly south, through the centre of the island. Gwyndu signifies, from its name, a place of hospitality at the expense of the lord; and it answers, in some respects, to its title even now; nor must we
forget

forget to pay our tribute of thanks to the host, who paid us the utmost attention, and appeared particularly solicitous about us. We left this hospitable inn with regret, and arrived at Hoel Don Ferry, which we crossed, after a sleepless night, happy to quit this rather inauspicious island.

forget to pay our tribute of thanks to
 the hosts who paid us the utmost
 attention, and appeared particularly
 hospitable about us. We left the
 island at 11 o'clock, and after a
 pleasant voyage of eight days, arrived
 at our destination, the island of

Oahu, the largest and most fertile
 of the Hawaiian Islands. We
 landed at Honolulu, the capital,
 and found a most friendly
 reception. The Governor, Mr.
 King, and the other officials
 were all present to meet us.
 We were lodged in the most
 comfortable quarters, and
 the food was excellent. The
 climate was just what we
 needed, and the people were
 very kind and hospitable.

Our tour of the island was
 most interesting. We visited
 the most beautiful spots, and
 saw many of the most
 interesting relics of the
 ancient civilization. The
 people were very kind and
 hospitable, and we were
 everywhere received with the

TOUR

FROM

SHREWSBURY TO OSWESTRY,

ELLESMERE, BANGOR, MOLD,

AND

FLINT.



T O U R
FROM
SHREWSBURY TO OSWESTRY,
BANGOR, MOLD, and FLINT.

THE town of Shrewsbury is seated within a peninsula, with ground finely sloping in most parts to the river. The castle was judiciously placed on a narrow isthmus 200 yards wide, which connects it to the main land: Roger de Montgomery made this his principal seat. The town was not defended by walls till the year 1219, nor paved until the next reign, by the assistance of certain customs granted for that purpose.

pose. In almost every part the original walls were at a distance from the river. Those on the south-east side of the town are kept in good repair, and form pleasant but interrupted walks, by reason of flights of steps. This town had for many ages been the capital of POWISLAND, and the seat of the princes. In the time of Edward the Confessor it had only two hundred and fifty-two houses. The manufactures are but inconsiderable, but it draws very great profit from those of Montgomeryshire, this place being the chief mart for them. The free-school stands near the castle, in a broad handsome street; it was founded by Edward VI. in 1552. Two bridges connect this peninsula with the country. The *Welsh Bridge* is a very ancient structure of six arches, with an handsome embattled gateway at one

one end. On the side of the river stood the great mitred Abbey of *St. Peter and St. Paul*, founded, in 1083, by *Roger Earl of Shrewsbury*. There are many other historical evidences of the antiquities of the town, for more particulars of which I must refer the reader to *Philips's History of Shrewsbury*.

Near the town is the Upper and Lower Berwick; one the seat of — Betton, Esq. the other of T. Powis, Esq. both commanding delicious views of the river and town of Shrewsbury.

The ride from Shrewsbury to Oswestry is, in many parts, picturesque and beautiful. Those mountains, that have often terrified from their stupendous height, now break forth with awful and sublime effect upon the eye of the traveller, whilst the fertile vales, screened from the
tem-

tempest, bud and blossom at their feet,

“Wasting their sweetness on the desert air.”

GRAY.

About eight miles distance from Shrewsbury is Nesccliffe, a small village, situated at the foot of some freestone rocks.

A little further on the road are fine views of the three Beddins hills, rising abruptly from the plain to the height of about one thousand feet, marking the boundary between the counties of Montgomery and Salop: on the summit of the largest hill stands a column, which was erected to record the splendid victory of Admiral Rodney over the French fleet, 1782. At a small distance, on the left of the road, is the Hill of Llanymyneck, remarkable for a fine prospect, but better worth notice

as

as containing by far the most extensive lime-works of any in this part of the country. This hill ascends gradually out of the plain of Shrewsbury.

Oswestry.—A considerable town, about two miles distant from Whittington, a place celebrated in Saxon history and legendary piety. On this spot, on August 5, 642, was fought the battle between the Christian Oswald, king of the Northumbrians, and the Pagan Penda, king of the Mercians. Oswald was defeated and lost his life. At present, there is not a relique of any old building, excepting the ruins of a chapel, over a remarkably fine spring, that still bears the name of the Saint: near the church is a spot moated round, the use of which is now quite unknown. The present church is of no great antiquity, is spacious,
and

and has an handsome plain tower. We learn from a monument in memory of Mr. Hugh Yale, that the old church was demolished in 1616. The town was fortified with a wall and four gates; that called the Black Gate is demolished; the New Gate, the Willow Gate, and the Beatrice Gate, still remain. The last is an handsome building, with a guard-room on both sides; and over it the arms of the Fitz-alans, a lion rampant. There are only a few fragments of the castle remaining to mark its fallen state, and call to our recollection the departure of its former greatness.

Hanymynech is prettily situated on the banks of the Virnwy.

Sir William Dugdale says, that there was a castle at Oswaldstŵr, at the time of the conquest, which is probable; and it had its chapel placed

placed at a little distance, dedicated to Saint Nicholas, and was in the gift of the Earls of Arundel. This town was garrisoned for the King in the beginning of the civil wars, but was taken in June 1644 by the Earl of Denbigh and General Mytton; men eminent for military knowledge.

About a mile from Oswestry, in the parish of Sellatyn, lies a fine ancient military post on an eminence, of an oblong form, which has been fortified with much art.

In Sellatyn parish is Parkington, the seat of R. G. Owen, Esq. pleasantly situated, and well wooded. This place takes its name from a singular entrenchment in a neighbouring field. Sir J. Owen, the famous royalist, was of this house, but not of the family.

From

From Oswestry we continued our journey to Ellesmere, a pleasing ride. From an eminence called the Perthy, we had a most extensive view of the flat part of the country, bounded by the hills of Denbighshire, Montgomeryshire, and Shropshire; amidst them appear the vast gaps through which the Severn and the Dee rush upon the plains out of their mountainous confinement. This track is intermixed with woods, fertile lands, and moors of great extent.

Alston is situated on an elevated spot of ground; a very extensive wood flanks each side of the house, which is bounded by a fine piece of water, made by extending the banks of the river Perry.

Ellesmere is a town situated on a lake of an hundred and one acres in dimension, and whose greatest depth is twenty-six yards, well stocked with

with fish. The Duke of Bridgewater owns this fine water.

The environs have two advantages superior to the other lakes. A good town borders on one side; the fine park of Ockle, or Ollby, with the venerable wooden house, is a great ornament to the other.

The park is covered with trees of great size and ancient growth. A vast lime-tree, of the small-leaved variety, is particularly conspicuous. The ground is finely broken into several risings, and the views charming, of the town, of the mere, and of the two others, Whilemere and Colemere. The situation, taken all together, may be looked upon as a first rate, and particularly desirable.

The town is of Saxon origin, and takes its name from the water, which was called Aelfmere.

The

The castle stood on a vast artificial mount, on a high ground, with three large ditches on the more accessible side: of which, at present, there is not a vestige to be seen.

Our next stage was to Overton, a pleasant village, seated on a rising bank. About a mile beyond the bridge, above a rich meadowy flat, varied by the Dee, you have a charming view; bounded in front with fertile and wooded slopes, while the lofty and naked mountains soar beyond, and close the delightful scene.

In 1278, in the reign of Edward the First, it was in possession of Robert de Crevecœur, who obtained for it a weekly market, held on a Wednesday. There are no reliques of its fallen castle, which stood in a field, still called Castlefield to this day. The church is an handsome building, and the church-yard reckoned

koned among the wonders of Wales, on account of its handsome yew-trees, which are ranged in the most regular order that can be conceived round the church-yard. The epitaphs here are numerous, and many, from their singular composition, would afford the traveller some amusement.

Mr. Fletcher's feat, called Gwern-hailed, in this parish, must not pass unnoticed. Few places command so fine a view, and few have been more judiciously improved: it stands on the lofty brow that skirts the country; beneath runs the river Dee, bounded on the opposite side by beautiful meadows, and varied in the distance by a number of hills, some of small, and others of considerable magnitude.

About five miles from Overton is Bangor, seated also on the banks of the Dee, which is here bounded
on

on both sides by rich meadows. The church has been built at various times, no part of which is very ancient; nor does it particularly arrest the attention. This place is, however, celebrated for being the site of the most ancient British monastery, or rather seminary, in England or Wales; it was supposed to contain two thousand four hundred monks, who, dividing themselves into seven bands, passed their time alternately in prayer and labour. William of Malmesbury, the celebrated monk, cotemporary with King Stephen, speaks of the remains in his days, saying, "That no place could shew greater remains of half-demolished churches, and multitudes of other ruins, than were to be seen in his time in Bangor."

This place has also been the site of the supposed Bonium, or Bovium,
I a Roman

a Roman station. Leland says, that in his time Roman money was found here. The bridge is a beautiful light structure, and consists of five arches.

On the road from hence to Wrexham stands Marchwail, celebrated for its antiquity; and after a short ride we arrived at Wrexham. (Vide page 63.)

From Wrexham to Caergwrlé the traveller will find much to arrest the eye in the beauty of the scenery; Wales here puts on a less formidable appearance. Cultivation and the hand of labour have done much for this part of the country, to render it a very desirable situation.

Caergwrlé is a village on the banks of the Alun, the form of which speaks it to have been a Roman station, which, to the antiquarian eye, is evident. The castle stood on the
P sum-

summit of a great rock; precipitous on one side, and of steep ascent on the others. Some of the walls and part of a round tower still remain, sufficient to shew that its size was never great. It is probable this castle was one of the few Welsh fortresses that we have to boast of. Here Eleanor the Queen of Edward I. lodged in her way to Caernarvon, where her husband sent her to give the Welsh a ruler born among them. The village and church of Hope lie about a mile from the castle. On the north side the of stream, west of the castle, on a lofty hill, is Bryne Yorkyn, the paternal seat of Ellis Yonge, Esq. The first charter given to Hope was by Edward the Black Prince, dated from Chester, 1351. Caergwrle with Hope is a prescriptive borough.

Abundance of limestone is burnt into lime on Caergwrle hill, a lofty
moun-

mountain, composed of that species of stone, from which a vast trade is carried into Cheshire and other places. From hence to Mold you pass Leefwood, the seat of R. Hill Waring, Esq. charmingly situated and well wooded. Mold is a small neat town, consisting principally of one handsome street, on a gentle rising, in the midst of a small but rich plain. The church is placed on an eminence, and is of the time of Henry VII.: it has of late years been adorned with a handsome steeple. The architecture of the church is of the Gothic, of the beginning of the sixteenth century; the windows large, and their arches obtuse. The same may be observed of the old building over St. Winifrede's well, at Holywell. The mount is now called the Bailey-hill. It appears to have been strongly fortified by great
P 2 ditches,

ditches, notwithstanding its arduous ascent. The summit of this hill commands a short but most exquisite view of the circumjacent vale; and to the west, Moel-famma rises with awful pre-eminence among the Clwydian hills. Powell says, that, "The first certain account that we have of this place is in the reign of William Rufus, when we find it in possession of Eustua Cruer, who then did homage for Mold and Hope-dale;" and he further adds, "That much of the country was (in the reign of Edward I.) so covered with woods, that, before his conquest of Wales, he was obliged to cut a passage through them, in the tract between Mold and a place then called Swerdewood. About a mile west of the town is Maes Garman, a spot that still retains the name of the faintly commander, in the celebrated

brated battle, the *Victoria Alleluia-tica*, fought in 420 between the Britons and Saxons, who were carrying desolation through the country. Not far from Mold stands Givysaney; a most respectable old house, beautifully situated: it was of strength sufficient to be garrisoned in the time of the civil wars, and was taken on the 12th of April, 1645. Here also the county assizes are held.

Cambria here lays aside her majestic air, and condescends to assume a gentler form.—We for some time hung over the charming vale which opens with exquisite beauty from *FRON*, the paternal estate of the Rev. Mr. Williams, delightfully situated, commanding a rich prospect of well-cultivated lands.

Northope, a small town, bears the addition of *North*, to distinguish it from the other *Hope*. The church

is a neat structure, and the tower lofty and handsome.

Between the eight and nine mile-stone, at a small distance out of the Chester road, are the ruins of Eulo castle, placed on the edge of a deep wooded dingle. It is a small fortress, consisting of two parts; the towers of which are finely overgrown with creeping ivy, and command the view of three wooded glens, deep and darksome, forming the most gloomy solitude a human mind can conceive.

In the woods near this place Henry the Second, in 1157, lost part of the flower of his army, being surprised and defeated by David and Conan.

From hence we passed on to Flint, a distance of about five miles; this town being seated on a flat beside the river Mersey and well wooded, is not so much exposed in the tempestuous

ous season of the year, to suffer cold in any degree equal to other towns in North Wales, whilst the gentle sea breeze renders it particularly wholesome.

Although this be the county town, it has suffered itself to be surpassed by the town of Holywell; it is doubtless capable of great improvements, and why not establish manufactories here? In this place, emulation may be said to sleep, and leave the gifts of fortune to be reaped by her neighbours.

The place is laid out with much regularity, but the streets are far from being completed. The removal of the greater and the lesser sessions, and its want of trade, will be further checks to its improvement. This town gave name to the county, which, with that of Caernarvon, Merioneth, and Anglesea, composed

the four ancient North Welsh shires, formed by Edward the First, immediately after the conquest of the principality.

The town is formed on the principle of a Roman encampment, being rectangular, and surrounded with a vast ditch and two great ramparts, with four regular partæ, as usual with that military nation. The public buildings within this precinct are the church, the town-hall, and the jail, not one of which is any particular ornament to this little capital. The castle is a square building, with a large round tower at three of the corners, and a fourth a little disjointed from the other, and much larger than the rest. This is called the double tower: it had been joined to the castle by a drawbridge, and is of great thickness.

The

The founder of this castle is uncertain. Camden attributes it to Henry the Second. On the restoration it was resumed by the crown, among its other rights, in which it still continues. The crown governs it by a constable, who is likewise mayor of Flint.

The impending rocks which overhang the path in some parts of the lower road to Chester from hence, give a solemnity and beauty to the ride. The road is beside the river, which at low water is nearly passable in some parts, though at full tide it measures five miles over. Hoyle Lake and Park Gate, on the opposite side, with the busy town of Liverpool, which from some points may be seen, and the vessels gently wafting commerce to our shores, all greatly enrich a scene that has been thus

thus delineated by the poetical pencil
of Miss Seward :

- " Far on the right, the dim Lancastrian plains,
" In pallid distance, glimmer thro' the sky,
" Tho' hid by jutting rocks, thy splendid fanes,
" Commercial LIVERPOOL, elude the eye.
- " Wide in the front the confluent oceans roll,
" Amid whose restless billows guardian HOYLE,
" To screen her azure LAKE when tempests howl,
" Spreads the firm texture of her amber Isle *."

* The *Sand Island*, which lying in the sea, a mile from shore, forms *Hoyle*, or *High Lake*.

7 JU 66

FINIS.

